How to Read the Prophets

Part II.

-·Isaiah·-

(Ch. I.–XXXIX)

Bughanan Blake B.D.

Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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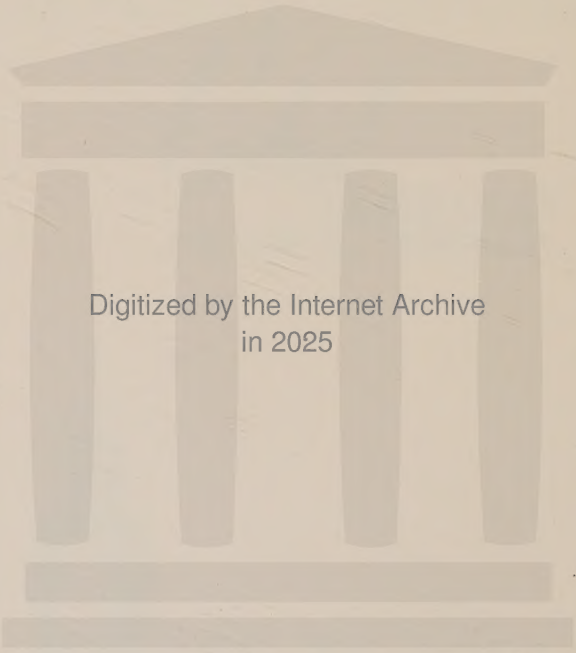
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Damascus
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Tyrus
Acchi
Hermon
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Trachonitis
Samaria
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Lake Aram
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HOW TO READ ISAIAH

BEING ISAIAH I. TO XXXIX.
ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY IN ITS
HISTORICAL SETTING

"HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS"
PART II.

BY THE

REV. BUCHANAN BLAKE, B.D.

CLYDEBANK

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"A history of the origin of Christianity, if begun at the time when the primitive Christian ideas were formed, would have to start from Isaiah."

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DIVISION II.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The aim of this manual is to place within the reach of all who desire to understand the life and work of the great prophet Isaiah, a simple and popular statement, embodying, as far as possible, the more outstanding results of modern investigations. Much has been done by specialists to make the prophecies of Isaiah more intelligible, and therefore more interesting to Bible readers. Great progress has been made in these later years in the discovery of a more correct Hebrew text, and the deciphering of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian inscriptions goes on with diligence, every new advance shedding light on words and institutions found in Scripture. Of course, the quest after absolute agreement on all details is futile, but a broad, general view of the circumstances in which our prophet lived, with a definite grasping of his teaching in main outline, will always be of supreme value. Where the bondage of the letter may kill, the spirit certainly gives life.

This manual has chiefly the practical aim of helping those who would read Isaiah for purposes of popular exposition, or for devotional meditation. The preparation of it was suggested, nay rendered necessary, by an endeavour to give some clear idea of the prophecies to a popular audience. The demand for a third edition is proof that what was thus useful to the writer, has also been useful to very many others; and, in issuing this edition, while still avoiding all terms and phrases of a

technical kind, such revision has been made as more completely to carry out the aim in view.

This is not meant to be a commentary, or verse by verse exposition, such as is most ably given in the Cambridge Bible Series. The purpose rather is to give a historical representation of the prophetic teaching in its own environment, and so to relate the one to the other. Thus the text of the prophecy is first given in continuous form according to the order of time and subject matter. The reader is asked to go right through this before turning to the second part. To let the text shine in its own light notes and comments are avoided here, and only some relevant extracts given from the historical books to secure the end more effectually. Changes in translation have not only been rendered necessary by an effort to follow the most approved text, but also by the arrangement of prose and poetry in their own form. Chapter and verse divisions, which so often give Scripture a mechanical appearance, and interrupt the natural order of delivery, are, of course, omitted. We want to see and hear the prophet as he spoke to his own people; we desire to get at the very heart and meaning of his words.

Of course the difficulties of this task must always be recognised. The prophecies of Isaiah have come down to us in a form indeed, which, in the opinion of some, almost makes it impossible to get back now to the original meaning. The book of Isaiah as it now lies before us, with its sixty-six chapters, is most certainly a literary unity; in its present form it appears as one book with one editor. The original historical references and background are, if not rejected, assuredly largely minimised, and the importance of the book lies in this, that it is a great book

of consolation for the people of God in days of trial. For they are taught how truest comfort may come to them from the divine appreciation of righteousness, which has ever accounted for all the terrible judgments that have fallen on every oppressor of God's heritage, be he Assyrian or Babylonian, Philistine or Egyptian, Moabite or Edomite, and which by mighty and effective deliverance always secures the ultimate blessedness of those who trust in God. Thus broadly viewed the Book falls into three divisions: (1) chapters i.-xii., (2) xiii.-xxvii., (3) xxviii.-lxvi. But this division ignores the original historical conditions, and emphasises the spiritual and consolatory worth of the Book for all time.

We must come closer to history. Now most probably smaller collections of Isaianic prophecy were first made. In two places it is suggested that Isaiah wrote down two distinct series of prophecies, when repulsed at court he withdrew from strenuous utterance, and in retirement wrote down his testimony for the days to come (viii. 16, xxx. 8). Around these smaller collections, others would in course of time gather and naturally enough would receive the name of the great master-mind, in whose formative and influential ministry their principles found first and simplest expression, even though some of these were not written in their present form, or in any form by Isaiah. His personality was magnificent and dominant. He had his own definite programme, with clear and distinct views about Jehovah with a relation to all mankind, because supremely concerned in righteousness. Thus to him, as the great head of a prophetic school, prophecies in line with his own, and fully carrying out his principles in new conditions would readily be ascribed. It was in this way, we know, that the whole

Levitical Law was ascribed to Moses, Israel's first and greatest law-giver, while that Law reached its full and final codification only after long generations. So also the Book of Psalms has been called the Psalms of David, though containing psalms written by many psalmists, and few (if any at all in the form he composed) by David, while yet he was Israel's sweet singer, and founder of its minstrelsy. We need not, then, be surprised to find prophetic oracles of later date than Isaiah bound up in the final edition with his own original and genuine utterances. The smaller collections, with other single and separate prophecies on parchments of value not necessarily placed under any distinct author's name, nor in any order of time with suitable introductions were gathered at a late period into the form in which we have them now. There are few notes of time such as the death-years of Uzziah and Ahaz for the dating of the oracles, so that when knowledge of the historical conditions, and interest in them had passed away, the worth of the prophecies, as an instruction of God, would be emphasised. Allegorising and spiritualising methods of interpretation in the hands of Jewish Rabbis soon gave meanings which threw the primary, historical application farther into the background. A new interest, even the category of a Messianic time, was used as a principle of exegesis. Texts were explained not in their true and literal meaning, but in the light of this principle. Can we then get back to the historical meaning? Can we get away from all secondary meanings and traditional explanations, which, after all, are only a commandment of men, and not a "Thus saith the Lord"? Can we read Isaiah in the light of his own times, and find place and time for the grand oracles grouped under his name?

For we must do justice to the prominent part played by our prophet in Jerusalem in his own day and generation. Through him the Divine Spirit, the one and only source of all true and valid inspiration, uttered in pregnant and powerful word those principles concerning righteousness and its consequences, which are essential and abiding, nay eternal in their character. In and by a spoken Testimony Jehovah was revealing Himself to Jerusalem; so that to get close to Isaiah, to come into living, personal touch with him, is to come into fellowship with the living God, and to understand how He "at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," preparing men step by step for the fuller revelation of a later day. The Divine influence which enabled the men of old, sent by God, to speak even as they were carried forward, can still enable us to understand what they said, and so to rise by their aid even to heights far beyond any they ever contemplated. The higher or deeper ethical and spiritual fulness must thus be broad-based on a true historical appreciation of the first and actual meaning of the spoken word. The prophecy as such being a message, or declaration of the Divine mind and will, has to be studied in the circumstances of its first delivery, when prophets, eager contestants for God, stood in the breach amid much opposition speaking with throbbing emotion to their own people what was meant to meet present and urgent needs. We have to seek for suitable time and place for such speaking.

Following out this aim we have as our first great section chapters i. to xii. Here chapter i. is introductory and later than chapter viii. The section II. 2-6 with chapters xi. and xii. stands by itself, but from II. 7 to X. 34 we

have what is, for the most part, the earliest collection of Isaiah's prophecies. A second section gathering round some genuine words of Isaiah is that from chapters xxviii. to xxxiv., for here we have an earnest work of the prophet in a time of crisis. The third section is that not merely giving history, as in the corresponding passages in the Book of Kings, but prophetic instruction thereanent, contained in chapters xxxvii.-xxxix. Again chapters xiii. to xxiii. contain a homogeneous collection of oracles against the nations arranged in two series of five each, grouped round a genuine Isaianic oracle against Syria (ch. xvii.) and Isaianic words against Moab and Egypt. Likewise chapters xxiv. to xxvii. are a complete and much later oracle concerning some great world-judgment. Chapters xxxv. and xxxvi. deal with the blessedness of a redeemed people, and form suitable introduction to the magnificent cycle of Restoration Prophecy (ch. xl. to lxvi.), with its references to a people just closing a sad captivity, as the ruins of the holy and beautiful house in which their fathers worshipped God are recalled to mind. The controversy is not now about two Isaiahs; it goes as we have seen much deeper, under the influence of a true historic sense. It always was the function of a prophet to be God's spokesman to his own time, and he dealt always with foes and dangers on the horizon. In the Divine economy every age has its own duly commissioned prophet.

It is no gain to place Isaiah or any prophet in a situation different from what he occupied, and no truth gains anything from being ascribed to any particular author. We would in no way lessen the greatness of any prophet, but what concerns us is not the messenger, but the message.

The inspiration of that is guaranteed not by any splendid name, but by its own inherent worth.

And the worth of any prophecy for its own time is that out of which its worth for all time springs, even as the true supernatural works in and emerges from the natural. A valid Messianic exegesis does exist, and depends on this supreme confidence in an eternal God, who will yet right all wrong, which confidence prophecy enshrines and expresses. Such a faith demands all that is implied in a Messiah, and a Messianic time, and this in no manner that is arbitrary, but historically true. Prophecy, with a great yearning, requires a perfect day, a perfect king, and a perfect deliverance. When these come they will be their own best evidence; nothing going before can make them more true or more adequate for their ends. We rejoice in what the prophets under Divine guidance did in unveiling truth and accentuating principles of universal application; we accept with thankfulness all their contributions, but certainly the actual doing of God is far more marvellous than they knew. In this doing their principles are more than satisfied, and by this doing we are saved if with strong faith and confidence we believe in God. They who spoke of a Divine manifestation as man's urgent need rejoice with us in its accomplishment.

This volume is now Part II. of our series, entitled for more accurate description, "How to read the Prophets." At first there was no intention to do more than deal simply with the life and words of Isaiah, but through the kind appreciation and generous encouragement of many qualified friends, the plan adopted in the early endeavour has been now applied to all the prophets of the Old Testament. We have thus a prophetic pentateuch, dealing in five parts

with these grand voices of God in the olden days. This third edition of "How to Read Isaiah" has been almost entirely rewritten, and, of course, reset. A more complete and thorough-going consideration of the metrical style, so largely used in the composition of Isaiah's prophecies, has led to a more frequent employment of blank verse, which gives the prophecies a graphic and striking setting.

The carrying out of this work has been its own best reward. Often has the pulse been quickened, and a warm enthusiasm anew been kindled by the grand words of these great men of God—words which can never die. By their means God still whispers to His own in the ear, as with the same old-time all-mastering, yet sweet constraint, and so tells them ever, as with opened ears they listen, of living, urgent duty and high emprise. As then, so now, may we through their impulse and stimulus learn more worthily to do

"The work of the King,
Through a whole campaign of the world's life and death."

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

745-539 B.C.

B.C.	
745.	Tiglath Pileser, or Pul, becomes king of Assyria.
740.	Isaiah's inaugural vision. Death year of Uzziah.
738.	Menahem of Israel pays tribute to Assyria.
735.	Death of Jotham. Accession of Ahaz.
732.	The capture of Damascus.
727.	Shalmaneser succeeds Tiglath.
726.	Hezekiah becomes regent.
724.	Siege of Samaria begins.
722.	Sargon becomes king of Assyria, and finishes siege of Samaria.
720.	Defeat of Egypt at Raphia.
717.	Capture of Carchemish by Sargon.
715.	Death of Ahaz. Hezekiah sole king.
710.	Ashdod captured by Sargon's army.
709.	Merodach in Babylon reduced.
707.	Sargon builds Dur-Sarrukin and Nineveh.
705.	Sennacherib succeeds Sargon.
702.	Successful revolt of Merodach.
702.	Hezekiah's sickness and reception of Embassy.
701.	Assyrian invasion of Judah. Treaty made.
701.	Defeat of Egyptian allies at Altâku.
693.	Tirhâkah becomes Pharaoh.
(690-689?)	Flight of Assyrian army from Pelusium. Great deliverance of Jerusalem.
686.	Hezekiah's death. Manasseh succeeds.
662.	Fall of Thebes.
607.	Destruction of Nineveh.
588.	The captivity of Jerusalem.
559.	The rise of the Medes.
539.	Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus.

THE ORDER OF THE CHAPTERS IN ISAIAH WITH THE PAGE ON WHICH THEY OCCUR.

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Note.—Words in darker type in the text are in the order of their occurrence dealt with in the Table of Notes at the end.

DIVISION I.

THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER I.

The Historical Conditions of Isaiah's Ministry. Its Duration (740-688 B.C.).

The kings concerned.

> The Vision of **Isaiah**, the Son of Amoz, which he saw concerning **Judah** and **Jerusalem**, in the days of **Uzziah**, **Jotham**, **Ahaz**, and **Hezekiah**, kings of Judah.
>
> (Isa. ch. i. 1.)

The reign of Uzziah (810-740 B.C.).

Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. He built **Eloth**, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah did. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the fear of God; and as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper.

And he went forth, and warred against the **Philistines**, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in **Gur-Baal**, and the **Mehunims**. The **Ammonites** also gave gifts to Uzziah. And his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he became exceeding strong. Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. Also he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns; for he had much cattle, both in the **lowland** and on the table land, husbandmen, and vine dressers in the hills, and in the fruitful fields, for he loved agriculture.

Moreover, Uzziah had an host of fighting men that went out to war in troops, according to the number of their reckoning, as made by Jeiel the scribe, and Maaseiah the officer under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. The whole number of the heads of fathers' houses of the mighty men of valour, were two thousand and six hundred. And under them was an army three hundred and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power to help the king against the enemy. And Uzziah prepared for them, throughout all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail, and bows, and slings for stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines of war designed by ingenious men, to be on the towers, and on the outworks, to shoot arrows and large stones with.

(2 Chron. xxvi. 1-15[a].)

Uzziah's sin and fall (754 B.C.). **Jotham regent** (754-740 B.C.).

And his name spread far and wide; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, and brought about his destruction. For he transgressed against Jehovah his God, and went into the temple of Jehovah, to burn incense upon the altar of incense; but Azariah, the priest, went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men; and they withstood Uzziah, the king, and said unto him: "It is not for thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated, to burn incense! Go out of the Holy Place; for thou hast trespassed. This shall not bring honour to thee from Jehovah!"

Then Uzziah was wroth, and held a censer in his hand to burn incense. But while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense. Then Azariah the High Priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and behold! he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out thence. Yea, he himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a lazar-house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the House of Jehovah. And Jotham his son was Regent, ruling the people of the land.

Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. So Uzziah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial, which belonged to the kings; for they

said "He is a leper." And Jotham his son reigned in his stead. (2 Chron. xxvi. 15-23.)

Jotham's regency and reign (754-736 B.C.).

In the second year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. And he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit the High places were not removed; the people sacrificed, and burned incense still on the High places (2 Kings xv. 32-35). Thus the people were still doing corruptly.

He built the high gate of the House of Jehovah, and on the wall of **Ophel** he built much. Moreover he built towns on the hills of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers.

He fought also with the kings of the Ammonites, and defeated them; and the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him both the second year and the third.

So Jotham became strong, because he ordered his ways before Jehovah, his God.

Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo! they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. He was five-and-twenty years old when he became regent, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the **City of David.** Ahaz, his son, reigned in his stead. (2 Chron. xxvii. 2-9[b].)

CHAPTER II.

The Call, Consecration, and Commission of Isaiah (740 B.C.).

The prophetic vision.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw **Jehovah**, sitting as king upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Around Him stood the **Seraphim**. Each one had six wings. With two of them he covered his face, and with two he covered his body, and with two he flew. And they kept on crying one to another, saying :—

Holy ! Holy ! Holy ! Jehovah Sabaoth !
The whole earth is full of His glory !

And the foundations of the thresholds moved at the voice of them that cried, and the Temple was filled with smoke. Then I said :—

Woe is me ! I am undone ! I am a man of unclean lips !
I dwell among a people of unclean lips !
Mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah Sabaoth !

Then flew there to me one of the Seraphim, having a hot stone in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar-hearth, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said :—

"Behold ! this hath touched thy lips !
Thy sin is taken away ! Thy iniquity is purged !"

Then I heard the voice of Jehovah, saying :—

"Whom shall I send ? Who will go for Us ?"

And I said :—"Here am I ! send me."

Then He said :—

"Go, and speak to this people."

(Ch. vi. 1-9[a].)

CHAPTER III.

The Earliest Prophetic Preaching of Isaiah. In Jotham's Reign (740-736 B.C.).

An appeal to Samaria.

O house of **Jacob**! Come, let us walk in the light of Jehovah!
For Jehovah hath forsaken His people, the house of Jacob!
They are full of diviners from the East, and sorcerers, like the Philistines,
They ally themselves with the children of strangers;
Their land is full of silver, and gold, their wealth is without end;
Their land is full of horses, their chariots are without end;
Their land also is full of idols!
They worship the work of their hands, what their fingers make!
The common man boweth down, the great man falleth down!
And there is no forgiveness for them.
Enter into the rock, and bury thyself in the dust,
For fear of Jehovah, and His great majesty,
When He appears to shake terribly the earth.

The lofty looks of man shall be brought low,
And the pride of men shall be humbled!
For Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
Yea, Jehovah Sabaoth has His day upon all that is proud and lofty,
And upon all that is high and lifted up,
Even upon all the cedars of **Lebanon**, high though they be,
And upon all the oaks of **Bashan**, tall though they be,

Also upon all the mountains, high though they be,
And upon all the hills, lofty though they be,
And upon all the high towers,
And upon all fortified places,
Also upon all the **merchant** vessels,
And upon all splendid buildings.
Then bowed down shall be the pride of man,
And abased the haughtiness of men,
For Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.

Then the idols He shall utterly destroy.
Men shall go into the holes of rocks, and the caves of the dust
For fear of Jehovah, and His great majesty,
When He appears to shake terribly the earth!

Yes, in that day man shall cast his idols of silver and of gold, which they have made for themselves to worship to the moles, and to the bats,

To go into holes of rocks, and clefts of stones
For fear of Jehovah, and His great majesty,
When He appears to shake terribly the earth!

(Cease, then, from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be counted upon.) * (Ch. ii. 5-22.)

A warning to Jerusalem.

Now behold! Jehovah Sabaoth removes
From Jerusalem, and Judah, stay and staff,
(The whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water) †
The mighty man, and the man of war,
The judge and prophet, the diviner, and elder,
The captain of fifty, and the man of rank,

* Omitted in LXX. † An explanatory gloss.

The counsellor, the magician, and charmer,
"Yea, I shall make young men their princes
And outrage shall lord it over them!"

Then shall the people be oppressed by one another,
The youth shall insult the aged, the base the honoured;
When one lays hold upon another in his father's house,
"Thou hast an upper garment! Be thou my protector!
Oh! let this wreck be under thy care!"
He cries out in that day, "I will not be your healer!
For in my house there is neither food nor clothes!
Make not me a protector of the people!"

Alas! Jerusalem is ruined! Judah is undone!
For their words, and their deeds are against Jehovah!
To provoke the eyes of His majesty;
The very look of their face witnesses against them
And they openly declare their sin (as **Sodom** did),
Woe be unto them, for they wrong their own selves.
Of my folk a boy is lord! Women rule over them!
O my folk! Thy leaders mislead, and corrupt thy ways!
(Ch. iii. 1-9, 12.)

The moral.

Hail, ye righteous! It goes well with them,
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
Woe be to the wicked! It goes ill with them,
For they shall receive the doing of their hands!
(Ch. iii. 10, 11.)

The divine charge.

Jehovah stands up to plead! He rises to judge His Tribes!
Jehovah enters into judgment, with the elders and princes of His folk.

This is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth :—

Ah! you have eaten up the Vineyard,
The spoil of the poor is in your houses.
What mean ye by crushing My folk,
And grinding the face of the poor? (Ch. iii. 13-15.)

Complaint concerning luxury and extravagance in dress.

Thus also Jehovah hath said:—
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with stretched-out necks, and wanton eyes,
They go tripping along, and tinkling their anklets,
Therefore Jehovah shall smite with a scab the crown of the head
Of the daughters of Zion. Jehovah shall put them to shame.

In that day shall Jehovah take away the splendour of the anklets,
The sun and moon ornaments, the earrings, bracelets, and veils,
The diadems, step-chains, the girdles, smelling bottles, and amulets,
The finger rings, and nose rings; gala-dresses, mantles, shawls, purses,
Hand mirrors, linen vests, the turbans, and large veils.

In the place of perfume there shall be a mouldy smell,
In the place of a girdle, a rope;
In the place of dressed hair, baldness;
In the place of a mantle, a girding of sackcloth,
A brand in place of beauty!

Thy men shall fall by the sword! Thy mighty men in war!
Yea, her gates shall lament and mourn! Deserted shall she sit on the ground!

In that day seven women shall take hold upon one man, saying,
"We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel,
Only let us be called by thy name! Only take away our reproach!" (Ch. iii. 13; iv. 1.)

A series of seven woes. (1) Land covetousness.

Woe unto those that join house to house,
That lay field to field, till there is no more room,
And ye are made to dwell alone in the land!

Therefore, thus has Jehovah Sabaoth said in my ears:—
Verily your many houses shall be desolate,
Your great and fair places, without a dweller!
Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one **bath**
And the seed of an homer shall yield but an ephah.

The second woe. The drink sin.

Woe to those that rise up early to follow strong drink!
Who tarry late in the night, till wine inflame them!
Harp and viol, tabret and flute and wine are in their feasts,
But they regard not the work of Jehovah; they see not the working of His hands.
Therefore My people go into captivity, through want of sense.
Their honoured men are famished! The people are dried up with thirst!
Sheol hath enlarged herself, yea, opened her mouth wide.
Their glory, and pomp, and rejoicing descend into her!
And lambs graze on deserted lands,* and kids amidst the ruins. (Ch. v. 8-14, 17.)

* Text uncertain in v. 17.

The third woe. Moral presumption.

Woe to those, who draw guilt upon themselves
With cords of unrighteousness,
And punishment as with a cart rope—saying,
Let His work make speed! Let it hasten that we may see it!
Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh
And come that we may know it!

The fourth woe. Moral perversity.

Woe unto those that call evil good, and good evil!
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness!
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

The fifth woe. Conceit.

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

The sixth woe. Corruption.

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine,
And men of strength to spice strong drink!
Who for a bribe justify the wicked, and condemn the good.
(Ch. v. 18-23.)

The seventh woe. Oppression.

Woe unto them that pass wrong laws!
That enact measures of oppression!
Who deprive the needy of justice,
Who rob the poor of My people of their right,
Making widows their prey, the fatherless their spoil.
(Ch. x. 1, 2.)

The true glory.

The common man shall be brought down! The great man humbled!

The looks of the proud shall be abased !
But Jehovah Sabaoth shall be exalted in justice,
Yea God, the **Holy One**, shall be honoured in righteousness.
(Ch. v. 15, 16.)

A terrible foreboding of Samaria's destruction. In six scenes (735 B.C.). **First scene. The Divine wrath.**

As fire devoureth stubble, as flame consumeth chaff,
So their root shall be rotten, and their blossom disappear as dust.
Because they have cast away the teaching of Jehovah Sabaoth
And despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel !
Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against His people,
He hath stretched forth His hand, and smitten them.
Yea, the hills trembled, and their bodies rot in the streets.
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand is stretched out still. (Ch. v. 24, 25.)

Second scene of judgment. Danger from Syria.

Jehovah sends His word against Jacob,
And it lights down upon Israel,
That all the people may know it, even **Ephraim**,
And the inhabitants of Samaria, who are saying,
In the pride and obstinacy of their hearts,
"The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with stone ;
The sycamores are felled, but we will use cedars instead."
Therefore, Jehovah has stirred up his **foe** * against him,
And gathered his adversaries together.
The **Syrians** on the East, the Philistines on the West,

* Rezin, king of Syria.

And they have devoured Israel greedily.
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand is stretched out still. (Ch. ix. 8-12.)

Third scene of judgment. Irreligion.

The people turneth not to Him that smiteth them,
Neither do they seek Jehovah Sabaoth.
Therefore Jehovah cutteth off from Israel, head and tail,
Palm branch and rush, in one day.
The elder, and the honoured—he is the head;
And the prophet, who speaketh falsely—he is the tail.
For the leaders of this people led them wrong,
And those who were misled are destroyed.
Therefore Jehovah spares not their young men,
Neither has mercy on their fatherless and widows.
Because they are all hypocrites, and wrong-doers,
And every mouth speaketh folly.
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand is stretched out still. (Ch. ix. 13-17.)

Fourth scene of judgment. Anarchy.

See! wickedness is burning like a fire!
It is devouring the thorns and briers!
It sets fire to the thickets in the forest!
It rises up like the rising of smoke.
Through Jehovah's wrath the land is burnt up,
And the people are as fuel for the fire.
No man spareth his neighbour!
One seizeth on the right, but is hungry;
Another eateth on the left, and is not satisfied;
Each one eateth the flesh of his own arms!
Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh!

They are leagued together against Judah.
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still. (Ch. ix. 18-21.)

Fifth scene of judgment. Man's helplessness.

Oh! what will ye do in the day of judgment?
And in the desolation coming upon you from afar?
To whom will ye flee for help?
And where will ye entrust your wealth?
Beltis has sunk down! Osiris is broken! *
And under the slain they fall!
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand is stretched out still. (Ch. x. 3, 4.)

Sixth scene of judgment. The coming invasion.

God lifts up a signal to a distant nation;
He summons it from the end of the earth;
And lo! they are coming with speed quickly!
None of them is weary! not one stumbles!
(None of them slumbers! not one sleeps!)
Yea, not one of them loosens his girdle from his loins,
Not one unties his sandals from his feet.
Their arrows are made sharp,
And their bows are bent.
Their horses' hoofs as flint are accounted,
And their chariots as the whirlwind.
Their growl is like that of a lioness,
Yea, they growl like a young lion.
And they roar, and seize upon the prey,
Yea, they secure it, so that no one can rescue it.

* A graphic picture of the folly of trust in Egypt.

A day of gloom.

Aye, they shall roar against him in that day as the roaring
of the sea
If one looks to the earth, behold! darkness, trouble!
Even the light is darkened in its clouds!

(Ch. v. 26-30.)

The brightness of a better day.

In that day shall the planting of Jehovah be for beauty, and glory, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and adornment of those that are the escaped of Israel. And it shall be that he that is left in Zion, and remains in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, yea, every one reckoned among the living in Jerusalem, when Jehovah shall have washed away the sin of the daughters of Zion, and purged away the guilt of Jerusalem from her midst, by a breath of justice, and a breath of burning.

Then shall Jehovah come upon every place of Mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud by day, and a smoke and the flash of burning fire by night. And He shall be a shade from the heat, a refuge and shelter from storm and rain. (For over the whole He the glory is the canopy.) (Ch. iv. 2-6.)

The song of the vineyard.

Now let me sing for my beloved,
A song of my beloved about His vineyard.
My beloved has a vineyard,
Upon a very fruitful hill.
He dug it, and gathered out its stones;
He planted in it the choicest vine;
He built a tower in the midst of it:

He also made a wine-press therein;
Then He looked for good grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes!

Ah! now ye inhabitants of Jerusalem,
And ye men of Judah!
Judge ye between Me
And My vineyard.
What more could I have done for My vineyard,
That I have not done to it?
Why, when I hoped for good grapes,
Brought it forth wild grapes?

And now let me tell you,
What I shall do to My vineyard.
I will take away its hedge,
That it may be eaten up.
I will take away the wall thereof,
That it may be trodden down,
Yea, I will make it a waste,
That it shall not be pruned nor dug.

It shall send up briers and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain upon it.
For the vineyard of Jehovah Sabaoth
Is the house of Israel.
The men of Judah—they are
The plant of His choice.
He looked for **right**, but behold! might,
For justice, but behold! injustice. (Ch. v. 1-7.)

CHAPTER IV.

The Policy of King Ahaz. Judah and Assyria (735—720—715 B.C.).

In those days Jehovah began to send against Judah Rezin, the king of Syria, and **Pekah**, the son of Remaliah. Then Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead. In the seventeenth year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham began to reign. Twenty (and—)* years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not do that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, his God, like David, his father, but he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through **the fire** according to the abominations of the nations, which Jehovah had cast out from before the children of Israel. He also sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places and on the heights, and under every green tree. (2 Kings xv. 37—xvi. 4.)

The Syro-Ephraimitish Alliance.

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the House of David, saying, "Syria is confederate with Ephraim." Then his heart was moved, and the heart

* Ahaz must have been more than twenty then. Perhaps twenty-five.

of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. (Ch. vii. 1, 2.)

The distress of Ahaz. Alliance with Assyria.

At that time Rezin, king of Syria, recovered Eloth for Edom, and drove the people of Judah out of Eloth. The people of **Edom** also invaded Judah, and carried away captives, while the Philistines had invaded the towns of the Shephelah, and the Negeb of Judah. Ahaz therefore sent ambassadors to **Tiglath-Pileser**, king of Assyria, saying, "I am thy servant, and thy son! Come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." Then Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the House of Jehovah, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.

And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him, for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to **Kir**, and slew Rezin.

Now Ahaz had gone to Damascus to do homage to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria. And he saw an altar that was in Damascus. King Ahaz then sent to Urijah the priest the fashion and the pattern of the altar according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. Then when the king was come back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar, and offered thereon; yea, he burnt his burnt-offering, and his meal-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings upon this altar. And he took the brazen altar, which was before Jehovah from the forefront of the House,

from between the altar and the House of Jehovah, and put it on the north side of the altar. And King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying: "Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meal-offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice and his meal-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the sacrifice; and the brazen altar shall be for me to enquire by."

Thus did Urijah, the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded. And King Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases and removed the laver from off them, and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stone. And the covered way for the Sabbath, that they had built in the House, and the king's entrance without, he turned from the House of Jehovah, because of the king of Assyria.

(2 Kings xvi. 5-18.)

Isaiah condemns this alliance.

Then Jehovah said unto Isaiah:—

Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and **Shear-Jashub**, thy son, at the end of the conduit of the Upper **Pool**, in the highway by the Fuller's field, and say unto him:—

Take heed, and keep thyself calm!
Fear not, and let not thy heart melt!
Before these two stumps of smoking torches—
The fierce wrath of Rezin, Syria, and Remaliah's son.
Against thee has Syria purposed evil—
Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah also.

As they say, "Let us go up against Judah, and trouble it; let us take it to ourselves, and appoint as king in its midst, the son of **Tabeal**."

This is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth :—
It shall not stand ! No, it shall not come to pass !
The capital of Syria is Damascus,
And the head of Damascus is Rezin.
The capital of Ephraim is Samaria,
And the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son,
In a short time * Ephraim shall be destroyed,
So that it shall be no more a kingdom.
If ye believe not, ye shall not stand. (Ch. vii. 3-9.)

The prophet gives a sign.

Jehovah † spake again unto Ahaz, saying :—
Ask from Jehovah thy God, a sign,
Ask it either in the depth beneath, or in the height above.
But Ahaz said, "I will not ask a sign, neither will I put Jehovah to the proof." Then said the prophet :—
Hear ye now, O House of David ! Is it a little thing
To weary men, that you must weary my God too ?
Therefore Jehovah Himself gives you a sign,
Lo ! a damsel has conceived, and shall bare a son,
And his name she shall call **Immanuel**.
Before the child shall be able to discern good from evil,‡
The land, whose two kings thou fearest, shall be forsaken !
(Ch. vii. 10-16.)

The threatened desolation.

Jehovah shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon the house of thy father such days as have not come since Ephraim departed from Judah (even the king of Assyria). For it shall come to pass in that day,

* In sixty-five years. A later note.

† Perhaps added later for I, or he.

‡ Butter and honey shall he eat, when he is able to discern good from evil, taken in from v. 22.

Jehovah shall hiss for the fly and the bee,*
And they shall come, and all settle down,
In the mountain valleys, and rocky caves
And on every thorn tree, and every bush.

In that day shall Jehovah shave
With a hired razor, brought from beyond the **River**,†
The head and the hair of the body,
And also cut away the beard entire.

Yea, it shall come to pass in that day,
One shall keep a cow and two sheep
(And it shall be on account of milk in plenty, they shall eat butter),
Butter and honey shall they eat, who remain in the land.

Yea, it shall also be in that day,
Land, where fruitful vines grew richly,
Shall be given up to thorns and briers,
With bows and arrows shall they go there.

With thorns and briers shall the whole land be filled,
And up the hill-sides, that once were tilled,
None shall come for fear of thorns and briers
And they shall be a place for cattle to roam,
And for the wandering sheep. (Ch. vii. 17-25.)

A promise offered to Ahaz.

Then Jehovah said unto me :—Take thee a large tablet, and write upon it, in the common style, these words, **Maher-shalal-hash-baz**. I then took with me trustworthy witnesses, viz., Uriah, the priest, and Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah. And I approached the prophetess, and she

* *i.e.* for the land of Egypt, and of Assyria.
† The king of Assyria.

conceived, and bare a son. Then Jehovah said to me:—
Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, for before the child shall be able to say, my father, and my mother, the wealth of Damascus and the booty of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria. (Ch. viii. 1-4.)

The threatened Assyrian invasion.

Then again Jehovah spoke unto me, saying:—
Since this people refuse the trickling waters of **Shiloah**,
And are afraid of Rezin, and Remaliah's son,
Therefore Jehovah brings on them the waters of the **River**,
Strong and mighty, the king of Assyria, and his might,
They shall come over all its channels, and banks,
Yea, sweep towards Judah, overflowing, reaching even to the neck
Then shall his outspread wings fill all thy land.
(For God is with us.)

Rage, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces!
Give ear to this, all ye ends of the earth!
Gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces;
Gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces!
Form a plan—only to be broken,
Speak a word—only to come to nothing.
For God is with us.

For thus hath Jehovah spoken to me with an all mastering might, and forbidden me to walk in the way of this people, saying:—
Call not all an alliance, which the people call an alliance.
Fear ye not what they fear, neither be afraid;
Make Jehovah Sabaoth Himself the Holy One,
Let Him be your fear! Let Him be your dread.

(Then shall He become a sanctuary for you.)
A stone of stumbling, He shall be,
A rock of falling, to both the houses of Israel!
A trap, and a snare to those that dwell in Jerusalem,
Ah! **many** among them shall fall,
Yea, they shall stumble, and be broken,
Yea, they shall be snared and taken. (Ch. viii. 5-15.)

An oracle concerning Damascus. The doom of Syria.
Behold! Damascus is being destroyed as a city!
It is being made a heap, wholly forsaken!
Its towns are being given up to flocks,
And these lie down, undisturbed.
Yea, the defence of Ephraim is being taken away,
And the sovereignty from Damascus.
Ah! the remnant of Syria is being overthrown,
Even as the children of Israel shall be.

This is an **oracle** of Jehovah Sabaoth.
In that day dimmed shall be the glory of Jacob,
And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
It shall be as when the reaper gathers the corn,
And his hands reap the ears—
It shall be as when one harvests in the **Valley of Rephaim**.
For gleanings shall be left, as at the olive-beating.
Two or three berries on the top of the branch,
Four or five on the fruitful boughs.

This is an oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth.
In that day shall thy cities be deserted,
As the places forsaken by **Hivite** and Amorite.
For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation
And the Rock of thy strength, thou dost not mind.
Though thou plantest groves for **Adonis**,

And settest slips in them for a strange god,
When in the day thou plantest, thou didst make them grow,
When in the morning thou sowest, thou didst make them blossom,
But the harvest shall disappear
In a day of sickness, and desperate sorrow.

The true line of duty.

In that day shall man look to his maker
And his eyes shall regard the Holy One of Israel,
He shall not look to the things* which his hands have made,
Nor shall he worship what his fingers have made.†

(Ch. xvii. 1-6, 9-11, 7, 8.)

The conquest of Samaria (722 B.C.).

In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, began the siege of Samaria. **Hoshea**, the son of Elah, was reigning in Samaria over Israel; and he reigned nine years. But he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, yet not as the kings of Israel had done, that were before him. Against him came up **Shalmaneser**, king of Assyria, and Hoshea became his vassal, and brought him tribute. But the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea; for he had sent ambassadors to **So**, king of Egypt, and brought not his tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore, the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up through all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria.

(2 Kings xvii. 1-6.)

* The altars. † The **Asherim**, and sun-pillars.

The disappointment of the Prophet.

Ah ! hearing, ye hear, but ye do not understand !
Seeing, ye see, but ye do not perceive !
This people have made heavy their hearts, their ears dull,
They have closed their eyes !
Lest they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And turn back to Me, and be healed.

Then I said, "Ah ! Jehovah ! How long is this to go on ? And He said to me :—
Until the towns be wasted, and have no inhabitant,
Until the houses be without dwellers !
Yea, until the land shall become a desolation,
And Jehovah shall have removed men far away,
And made a great clearance in the midst of the land.
Aye, even should there still be a tenth,
It shall come, and be devoured by fire.
As happens in case of terebinth or oak,
When cut down, only a root remaineth in them !

A comforting thought.

The holy seed is the root thereof.* (Ch. vi. 9^{b}-13.)

The Prophet's retirement.

I † will bind up the testimony, and seal up the instruction among my disciples, and I will wait upon Jehovah, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. Yea, I will look unto Him. Behold ! I and the children, whom God hath given me are for signs and symbols unto Israel, from Jehovah Sabaoth, who dwelleth in Mount Zion.

* Perhaps later, omitted in LXX.
† Note the use of the first person here throughout.

When they shall say unto you, "Consult those that have familiar spirits, and wizards that peep and mutter. Should not a people consult their God? For the living should they consult the dead? To the Instruction and the Testimony! If they say not thus, no morning shall dawn upon them.

The result of disobedience.

They shall pass along famished and hungry,
Yea, when hungry, they shall be much troubled,
Then shall they curse their king, and their God,
They shall gaze above, and below to the ground,
And behold! trouble and darkness, anguish all around,
Aye indeed a gross darkness!

(And truly is there not all over the land a veil of anguish? In the former time He brought affliction upon the land of Zebulon, and Naphtali, but in later days He will bring honour to the Way of the Sea, the **Region** beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.) (Ch. viii. 16—ix. 1.)

The better day foretold.

The people, who walked in darkness!
They see a great light!
They who dwelt in a land of shadows,
Light has flashed upon them!
Thou increasest their gladness,
Yea, Thou makest great their joy.
They rejoice before Thee, as they rejoice in harvest,
As those exult, who divide the spoil!

For the yoke of their bondage,
And the rod upon their shoulder,
The goad of the driver upon them,
Thou hast broken, as in **Midian's** day!

For all weapons of the warrior in battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
Yea, they shall be for burning,
As fuel for fire.

For a child is born to us,
A son has been given us!
And it shall be that the government
Shall be upon his shoulder.
And there shall be given to him as name,
The Wonderful Counsellor! The Mighty Hero!
The Abiding Father! The Prince of Peace!

To the increase of his dominion
And to peace there shall be no end.
Upon the throne of David,
And over his kingdom—
To order and to establish it
In justice and righteousness
From this time, and for ever.
The zeal of Jehovah shall do this. (Ch. ix. 2-7.)

CHAPTER V.

Messages to the Kingdoms affected by coming Assyrian Invasions.

To the Philistines.

Rejoice not thou in every part, O Philistia!
That the rod that smote thee is broken.
Out of the serpent's root comes a viper,
Out of its seed a flying dragon!

My poor ones shall feed on My pastures,
And My humble ones lie down in safety,
But thy seed I will destroy by famine,
And thy remainder will I slay!

Howl, O gate! Cry out, O city!
Tremble, in every part, O Philistia!
Out from the North comes the smoke,
Not a straggler within their ranks!

Now what shall My people say
In answer to the world's envoys?
"Jehovah hath founded Zion,
In it His oppressed people find shelter."
(Ch. xiv. 29-32.)

An oracle concerning Tyre (709 B.C.).

Howl! ye merchant ships of Tarshish!
Your home port is being laid waste!
From the land of **Chittim**,
This is told unto them.

Extinguished are the inhabitants of the coast,
The merchant people of **Zidon**!
Those who navigate the seas,
Whose ships are on many waters,
Their harvest was the wheat of the Nile,
Their revenue the trade of the world.

Be ashamed, O Zidon, for the sea speaks,
"I have not travailed, nor brought forth,
I have not nurtured up young men,
Nor caused maidens to grow up!"

(Ah! when news of this comes to Egypt, it will grieve over the news that comes from Tyre.)

Pass ye over to Tarshish! Howl!
O ye inhabitants of the coast!
Is this your state, O town of joy?
You, whose origin is from of old!
You, whose feet carried you
Afar in every direction!
Who hath taken this counsel against Zidon,
The city that giveth crowns?
Whose merchants are princes,
Even the nobles of the earth,

Jehovah Sabaoth has taken this counsel,
To bring to shame the pride,
To bring low all boasting,
Even all the glorying of the earth.

Pass now through thy land,* O Tarshish!
There is now no more any strength!
He hath stretched His hand upon the sea,
He hath made kingdoms to tremble.
Jehovah hath given command against Canaan,
That its strongholds be destroyed.

Rejoice thou no more again,
Thou humbled daughter of Zidon!
To Chittim, rise up and pass over,
Ah! not there shalt thou find rest.
Howl, ye merchant ships of Tarshish!
For your strongholds are laid waste.

Behold the land of the **Chaldæans**! †
They have appointed her for the wild beasts,

* As the Nile.

† An explanatory line—
This is the people who did so, it is not Assyria. Text uncertain.

They have raised up their siege towers,
They have levelled her palaces,
They have made her to be a desolation.

(Ch. xxiii. 1-14.)

An oracle concerning Moab.

Alas! in a night it is destroyed!
Ar of **Moab** is laid waste!
Alas! in a night it is destroyed!
Kir of Moab is laid waste!

Up goes the daughter of Dibon,
On their high places to weep;
Upon Nebo, and upon Medeba
Moab makes lamentation.

Upon every head is the hair cut off,
Every beard has been shaven off;
In every street they gird themselves with sackcloth,
Upon all their roofs —

Yea, in all open places every one howls,
Pouring out their grief in weeping,
Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh,
As far as Jahaz it is heard!

Ah! the very being of Moab grieves,
Their soul quails within them,
Their heart cries out for Moab
Whose fugitives are at Zoar.

Ah! at the ascent of Luhith—
With weeping they ascend it.
Ah! at the way of Horonaim,
They lift up a shout of ruin.

Ah! the waters of Nimrim—
They have become dried up!
Withered is the grass! Gone the herbage!
There is no green thing!

Alas! for their riches, which they gathered,
And for their wealth!
They carry it away over the **Wâdi-el-Ahsa**!
The cry has gone round about,
Even round the whole of Moab.

To Eglaim sounds their howling,
And to Beer Elim their wailing,
For the waters of Dimon,
Are full of blood.

A coming disaster.

Ah! I am bringing upon Dimon further sorrow,
A lion upon the escaped of Moab, the remnant of the land.*
And it shall be—as fluttering birds, a scared nest,
The people of Moab shall be at the fords of **Arnon**.

(Ch. xv. 1-9; xvi. 2.)

Moab's appeal to Judah.

Send ye the **lambs** from the prince of the land,
From **Sela** through the wilderness
To the mountain of the daughter of Zion.
Take counsel! Execute justice!
Make thy shade, like the night,
Even in the middle of the day,
Shelter give to the outcasts,
Betray not the fugitives!
Let my outcasts dwell with thee,

* Or Adamah. Joshua xix. 36.

The fugitives of Moab.
Be thou a shelter to them,
From before the destroyer!
The extortioner hath ceased, the spoiler is no more,
The oppressor is destroyed from the land!
In mercy is the throne established,
Upon it sits one in faithfulness,
Even in the House of David,
A judge seeking for justice,
As he furthers righteousness.

Judah's refusal to ally with Moab.

We have heard of the boasting of Moab,
Its very great boastfulness;
Its pride, its boasting, and its haughtiness
And its vain prattling.

The lamentation continued.

Therefore Moab mourns over Moab,
They all mourn together.
For the raisin-cakes of Kir-haresheth,
They are wholly ruined!
For the vineyards of Heshbon languish,
The vine of Sibmah,
Whose noble grapes were smote down
By the lords of the nations.
It spread to Jazer,
It stretched through the wilderness,
Its branches spread themselves,
And wandered even to the sea.

Therefore, I weep with the weeping of Jazer
Over the vine of **Sibmah**!

I water thee, with my tears,
O Heshbon and Elealeh!
Ah! over thy fruits and harvest,
There has broken the war-cry.
Yea, gladness and joy have gone,
Even from the fruitful fields.
In the vineyards there is no singing
Nor shouts of joy.
No one treads out wine in the presses,
The vintage cry is silenced.

Therefore my inmost heart over Moab
Grieves like a harp,
And all within me, over Kir-haresheth.
For it will be that utterly wearied
Moab will appear on his high place.
When he comes into his temple to pray,
He cannot effect ought at all.

This is the Word, which Jehovah hath already spoken concerning Moab.

The final message.

And now this is the oracle of Jehovah :—

In three years like the years of a hireling, it shall come to pass that all the sovereignty of Moab, with all its great ado shall cease, and all that remains shall be small, little, and feeble. (Ch. xvi. 1, 3-14.)

An oracle concerning Edom.

Unto me, one is crying out of **Seir**,
Watchman, how far on is the night?
Watchman, how far on is the night?

The watchman answers :—

The morning is coming ! And also the night !
If ye enquire, enquire ! Come ye again.

(Ch. xxi. 11, 12.)

An oracle concerning Arabia.

In the thickets of the wilderness ye lodge at night,
O ye caravans of **Dedanim** !
Bring ye water for the thirsty,
O ye dwellers in the land of Tema !
Offer bread to the fugitives !
For they have fled from before the sword, the drawn sword,
From before the bent bow, and the horrors of war !

This is the Word, which Jehovah hath spoken unto me :—
Within a year, exactly measured,
All the glory of **Kedar** shall be over,
The remnant of their archers,
Even of the men of might among the children of Kedar,
Shall be greatly reduced.

Jehovah, the God of Israel hath thus spoken.

(Ch. xxi. 13-17.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH. THE DANGER THREATENED BY SARGON. THE KING'S SICKNESS. (715-702 B.C.)

His reforms, and rebellion against Assyria.

Twenty and five years old was Hezekiah when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was also Abi, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah according to all that David his father did. He removed

the High places, and brake the images, and cut down the Asherahs, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made (for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it), and he called it a **piece of brass**. He put his trust in Jehovah the God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to Jehovah. He departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses. And Jehovah was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth.

He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen, even unto the fortified town. (2 Kings xvii. 1-8.)

In the year that King Ahaz died was this oracle.

(Ch. xiv. 28.)

An oracle concerning Assyria.

Woe to Assyria! Thou art the rod of My anger,
And the staff in thy hand is My indignation.
Against a godless nation I am sending him,
And against a people, with whom I am displeased,
Charging him to take the spoil, and the prey,
Even to tread them down, as mire in the streets.
But this is not his thought,
Nor the purpose of his heart.
For it is in his heart to destroy,
And to cut off nations, not a few.

The Assyrian boast.

He is saying:—

Are not my captains, all of them, kings?

Is not **Calno** as **Carchemish**?
Is not **Hamath** as **Arpad**?
Is not Samaria as Damascus?

He is saying:—

By the strength of my hand have I done all this!
And by my own wisdom, for I am wise.
Yea, I **change** the boundaries of the nations,
And plunder their treasuries.
I bring down into ashes their towns
And cast down kings from their thrones.
Yea, as one seizeth a nest, my hand
Seizeth upon the riches of the peoples.
And as one gathereth the eggs that are left in it,
So do I gather the whole world to myself.
There was none, that moved its wing,
Or opened its mouth, and chirped against me.

As my hand hath seized upon these idol worshipping kingdoms though their idols were more than those of Jerusalem, can I not do unto Jerusalem, and her idols, as I have done unto Samaria, and her idols?

The boast rebuked.

But when Jehovah shall have finished all His work on Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, He will punish the fruit of he boastful heart of the king of Assyria, and the vainglory of his proud eyes. (Ch. x. 5-9, 13, 14, 10-12.)

The Divine plan.

Shall the axe boast itself against him that wields it?
Shall the saw brag itself against him that uses it?
As if a rod shakes those that lift it up,
As if a stick lifts up that which is not wood!

Therefore, Jehovah Sabaoth sends disease among his fat ones,
Beneath his glory, He shall kindle a burning, burning like fire,
The Light of Israel shall be the fire, and the Holy One a flame,
It shall burn, and devour his thorns and briers in one day;
The glory of the forest, and fruit field shall it wholly devour;
All shall be as when a sick man pineth away.
Then the trees that remain, will be so few that, a child may count them. (Ch. x. 15-19.)

The Divine purpose.

Thus hath Jehovah Sabaoth sworn :—
Surely as I have purposed, so shall it come to pass!
Yea, as I have determined, so shall it stand!
Even to break Assur in pieces in My land,
And on My mountains I will tread him down.
(Then shall his yoke depart from them, and his burden be removed from off their shoulders.)
This is the Purpose, purposed concerning the whole earth.
This is the Hand, stretched out upon all nations.
Jehovah Sabaoth hath purposed! Who can disannul it?
His Hand is stretched out! Who can turn it back?
(Ch. xiv. 24-27.)

A word of comfort to conquered Samaria.

And in that day shall the remnant of Israel, and those of Jacob that have escaped no more put their trust on him that smote them, but shall trust in truth upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel. The remnant shall return, "even the remnant of Jacob unto the mighty God."* For, though thy

* Hosea iii. 5. This is the translation of Shear Jashub.

people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, the remnant of them shall return ; for the destruction is strictly determined, flowing from righteousness. Yea, a destruction, strictly determined shall Jehovah Sabaoth make in the midst of all the land. (Ch. x. 20-23.)

An assurance to Jerusalem.

For thus saith Jehovah Sabaoth :—

Be not afraid, O My people, who dwell in Zion, of the Assyrian, who is smiting thee with his rod, and is lifting up his staff against thee, in the way that Egypt did. For yet in a little while, a short time, and My anger shall have an end, and My wrath result in his overthrow. Then shall Jehovah Sabaoth raise up a scourge against him, as in the slaughter of Midian (at the rock of Oreb), and as His rod was lifted up over the sea as in the case of Egypt. Then shall it come to pass in that day,

There shall go his burden from thy shoulder,
And his yoke be broken from thy neck.

(Ch. x. 24-27^a.)

A possible invasion described.

The destroyer comes from the north ! * He reaches Aiath !
He crosses Migron ! At Michmash he encamps !
He goes over the Pass ! In Geba let our quarters be !
Afraid is Ramah ! Gibeah of Saul flees !
Shout aloud, O daughter of Gallim !
Hearken, O Laish ! Answer her, O Anathoth !
In flight is Madmenah ! The people of Gebim are gone !
To-day he halts at **Nob** ! He shakes his fist
Against the Mount of Zion's daughter, the hill of Jerusalem.

* The text is uncertain here.

The Divine intervention.

Behold! Jehovah Sabaoth
Cuts off the crown with an axe!
Then the lofty ones are hewn down
And the haughty ones cast down.
Yea, cut down are the thickets of the forest,
Even Lebanon falls beneath a mighty one.
(Ch. x. 27^b-34.)

The sickness of Hezekiah, and his recovery (702 B.C.).

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death, and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah:—

"Set thine house in order, for thou art to die,
And shalt not recover."

Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto Jehovah, and said:—

Oh! Jehovah, remember how I have walked before Thee,
In faithfulness, and with a pious heart,
How I have done what is good in Thine eyes.

And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the Word of Jehovah to Isaiah, saying, Go and speak to Hezekiah.

Thus saith Jehovah, the God of thy father, David.
I have heard thy prayer! I have seen thy tears!
Behold! I will add to thy days **fifteen** years,
From the hand of the king of Assyria I will save thee,
And I will deliver this town.

(And Isaiah said, Let one take a lump of figs, and lay it on the boil, that he may get better.) Then Hezekiah said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the House of Jehovah?

This shall be to thee the sign from Jehovah,

That Jehovah will do what He hath said.
Lo! I will bring the shadow on the **steps** *
Which the sun has gone down, back ten steps.
Then the sun went back ten steps,
Which it had gone down.

(Ch. xxxviii. 1-6, 21, 22, 7-8.)

The Miktam or Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Which Hezekiah, king of Judah, wrote on his recovery from sickness :—

I said! I must pass away
In the noontide of my life!
In the gates of the grave I am losing
The remainder of my years!
I said, I shall not see Jehovah
In the land of the living.
I shall see man no more
Among the dwellers of the world.

My tent is taken up, and torn from me
As the tent of a shepherd!
I have rolled up as a weaver my life,
As he cuts it from the thrum!
Both day and night, Thou dost afflict me,
Even unto the morning I cry
As does a lion, so He breaketh
All my bones.

Like a swallow, so I chirp;
I mourn, as a dove.
My eyes fail, as I look upward!
O Jehovah, undertake for me!

* Some royal staircase,

What shall I say or speak to Him! It is His doing!
I shall go solemnly * all my life,
Because of the bitterness of my soul,
O Jehovah! By these things to Thee †
My heart expresses itself.

Revive me, and recover me,
O let me be well again!
Lo! for my well-being,
There came great bitterness.
For Thou deliveredst my soul
From the pit of destruction!
And Thou hast cast behind Thy back
All my transgressions!

For the Grave doth not praise Thee,
Death doth not honour Thee.
Those that go down to the pit do not hope
In Thy faithfulness.
He who lives, who lives, praises Thee,
Even as I do this day.
The father sings to his children
Of Thy faithfulness.

A devotional appendix.

O Jehovah! graciously save me!
Then shall we play on stringed instruments
All the days of our life,
In the House of Jehovah. (Ch. xxxviii. 9-20.)

An embassy from Babylon.

About this time **Merodach** Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters, and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard of

* A rare word in Hebrew. † Text very difficult.

his sickness, and recovery. Now Hezekiah was delighted, and he showed the ambassadors the house of his treasures, the silver and the gold and the spices and the fine oil and all his armoury and all that was in his possession. There was nothing in his house, and in his kingdom that Hezekiah showed them not. Then came Isaiah, the prophet, unto King Hezekiah, and said unto him, "What did these men say, and whence have they come to thee?" And Hezekiah said, "They are come from a far country, unto me, even from Babylon." Then said Isaiah, "What have they seen in thine house?" And Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing of my treasure, that I have not showed them."

The coming doom.

Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah:—"Hear the Word of Jehovah Sabaoth! Behold! the days shall come when all that is in thy house, all that thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing at all shall be left, saith Jehovah. And of thy sons, who shall descend from thee they shall take, and they shall be eunuchs in the Palace of the king of Babylon." And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, "Good is the Word of Jehovah, which thou hast spoken." And he added, "But there shall be peace and stability in my days." (Ch. xxxix. 1-8.)

CHAPTER VII.

Isaiah's Work in Jerusalem in view of a Crisis (705-702 B.C.).

A warning based on Samaria's fall.

Ah! the **crown*** of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim!
And the withered flower of their glorious beauty!
On the top of rich valleys! They are drunk with wine!
Lo! Jehovah hath a mighty and a strong one,
Like a tempest of hail, a destroying storm,
Like a flood of mighty waters, overflowing waters,
Who casts it down to the earth with a stroke!

Under the feet of man shall it be trodden down,
The crown of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim!
Even the withered flower of their glorious beauty
On the top of the rich valleys!
Ah! they shall be as the early fruit before its season,
No sooner does he look upon it,
Than, while it is yet in his hand, he devours it.

Ah! these also err through wine, and through drink go astray
Priest and Prophet! They err through drink!
They are confused by wine, gone astray through drink!
They err in vision; they stumble in judging.
All their tables are full of vomit,
Filthiness, ah! in every place around!

* (In that day Jehovah Sabaoth shall be for a crown of glory, and for a beautiful diadem unto the remnant of His people; yea, for a spirit of justice to him that judgeth and for courage to those who defend their country.)

Whom will he teach, and whom instruct?
Those who are weaned, just taken from the breast,
For it is, "Oh this, and Oh that!
A word here, and a word there!"
Yes, with stammering lip, and a strange tongue,
Will he speak to the people and say,
"This is the rest which gives rest to the weary
And this is the refreshing." Yet they would not hear!

Ah! the Word of Jehovah will be to them
An "Oh this, and Oh that,"
A word here, and a word there,
That they may go, totter backwards, and be snared.
(Ch. xxviii. 1-13.)

An earnest address.

Hear, then, the Word of Jehovah! Ye scornful people!
Ye that lord it over this people, that dwell in Jerusalem!
Ah! ye are saying,—
We have made an agreement with death,
And with the grave we are in covenant,
When the overflowing scourge passes by
It shall not touch us.
We have made lies our refuge,
And hidden ourselves in falsehood.
This is the Word of Jehovah Sabaoth:—
Behold! I have laid in Zion a stone,
A well-tried foundation stone,
A precious foundation stone,
He who trusts shall not make haste.
I am making justice the line,
And righteousness the plummet.
The hail shall sweep away your refuge,

And the waters shall overflow your shelter.
Your agreement with death shall be broken,
And your covenant with the grave shall not stand.
When the overflowing scourge passes by,
It shall crush you down beneath it.
As often as it passes by you,
It shall seize upon you,
For morning by morning shall it pass,
Both by day and night,
Yea, it shall be a vexation
Only to know the oracle.
The bed shall be too short for a man to stretch upon,
And the covering too small to wrap himself in.
For as at Mount **Perazim** shall Jehovah rise,
As at **Gibeon** shall He rage,
That He may perform His deed—
His strange deed.
That He may work His work—
His strange work. (Ch. xxviii. 14-21.)

An appeal to common sense.

So now be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made firm. I have heard from Jehovah Sabaoth, of the decreed destruction.

Give ear, and hear my voice,
Hearken, and hear my speech.
Does the plower plow always?
Does he open, and break the clods?
When he hath smoothed the surface,
Does he not sow his fitches, and his cummin?
Does he put the wheat and barley in rows,
And the rye in its own place?

Doth not discretion in right doing come?
Doth not his God instruct him?

The fitches are not threshed with sledges,
The cart wheel is not turned upon the cummin.
The fitches are beaten out with a stick,
And the cummin with a rod.
Is the bread corn crushed?
No, he is not always threshing it.
When he drives over it his cart wheel *
He takes care not to crush it,
This also cometh from Jehovah Sabaoth,
Wonderful is His counsel, great His wisdom.

(Ch. xxviii. 22-29.)

An oracle concerning the valley of vision.

Ah! what is this? You have all gone up to the house-tops!
Thou art full of stir, an excited town, a rejoicing city!
Thy slain are not slain with the sword, nor killed in battle!
All thy captains are fled, captured without shooting!
All in thee seized, though they had fled away!

Then I said:—
Look away from me! Let me weep bitterly!
Labour not to comfort me! My people are destroyed!
There comes a day of trouble, of trial, and of terror from Jehovah.
In the **valley** of vision, a breaking of walls, and a crying to the hills.

Lo! **Elam** takes up the quiver, with chariots and horses!
Lo! Kir has uncovered the shield!

* Horses not used in agriculture then; hence emended text.

Thy fairest valleys are full of chariots and horses,
They set themselves in array against the gate,
They come, and cast aside the defence of Judah!

Then ye look to the armour in the House of the **Forest**,
And ye see how many are the breaches in the city of David;*
But ye look not to Him that doeth this,
And Him who decreed it long ago, ye regard not.

Jehovah Sabaoth calleth to weeping and crying,
To cutting off of the hair, to girding with sackcloth.
But lo! there is rejoicing and gladness,
The slaying of oxen, the killing of sheep,
The eating of flesh, and the drinking of wine,
"Let us eat and drink! To-morrow we die!"

Ah! it hath been whispered to me by Jehovah Sabaoth,
"Surely this sin cannot be purged from you,
Until you die." Jehovah Sabaoth hath said it.

(Ch. xxii. 1-14.)

The humiliation of Jerusalem.

Woe to Ariel!† to Ariel!
Thou city, where David encamped,
Add year to year,
Let the festivals run their course!
Ah! I am going to distress Ariel,
And there shall be grief and sorrow!
Ah! thou shalt be to Me as an Ariel,
For I am going to besiege thee round about!

* Ye gathered together the waters of the lower **pool**, and numbered also the houses of Jerusalem; ye have broken down houses to repair the wall, and ye have made a channel between both walls for the water of the old pool.

† Ariel means either hearth, or lion, of God.

Ah! I will close thee in with ramparts,
And raise up mounds against thee;
Then humbled low, from the ground thou shalt speak,
And thy words shall come feebly from the dust.
Thy voice shall come as a ghost's from the earth,
And out from the dust shall thy words cheep!

A vision of sudden deliverance.

Then shall they be as small dust,
The multitude of thy foes,
And like the chaff that bloweth away,
The multitude of thy oppressors.
Ah! suddenly shall it happen in a moment,
Thou shalt be visited by Jehovah Sabaoth
With thunder, and earthquake, and great noise,
Storm and tempest, and flame of devouring fire.
And it shall be even as a dream,
As a vision in the night
The multitude of all the nations
That fight against Ariel,
Even all their mounds and bulwarks,
And they that distress her.
Yes, indeed it shall be as a hungry man dreams, he eats!
When he is awake, he is still hungry.
Or as a thirsty man dreams, he drinks,
When he is awake, he is still thirsty!
So shall be the multitude of all the nations
That fight against the Hill of Zion. (Ch. xxix. 1-8.)

The unbelief of Jerusalem.

Be astonished and surprised!
Blind your eyes, and be blind!

Be drunk, yet not with wine,
Stagger, yet not with strong drink.
Ah! Jehovah hath poured upon you
The spirit of a deep sleep;
He hath closed your eyes (the prophets,)
And stopped your ears (the seers).

For indeed to you their prophecy has become like the words of a closed book, which one hands over to one that is learned, saying, "Read this, I pray you, for I cannot, because it is closed." And then the writing is given to one who is not learned, saying, "Read this, I pray you, for I do not understand any writing."

(Ch. xxix. 9-12.)

Thus speaks Jehovah.

Seeing that this people draw near to Me with the mouth, and with their lips honour Me, while their heart is far from Me, and their reverence for Me is only a commandment of men, a teaching,

Therefore, behold! I will treat them wonderfully,
I will act very wonderfully!
And the wisdom of their wise shall cease,
The insight of their discerning shall vanish!

Woe to those who are hiding from Jehovah,
In order to carry out their plan!
And it is all in the dark, what they do!
As they say, Who seeth us? Who knoweth us?

(Ch. xxix. 13-15.)

The mighty power of God.

Your perversity! As if the potter were but clay!
That the work should say to its maker, "He has not made me."

The thing framed to its framer, "He has no sense!"
Is it not a little while, and Lebanon shall be a fruitful field?
And the fruitful field be reckoned a forest?
When in that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book,
And, obscurity and darkness gone, the eyes of the blind shall see.
Then the humble shall more and more joy in Jehovah,
And the poor shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
The tyrant shall be no more! Ceased the scorner!
Yea, cut off shall be all, who watch for wrong-doing!
Who make men guilty by a word,
And who lie in wait for the judge in the gate,
And by empty charges wrong the just.
Therefore thus saith Jehovah, God of the house of Jacob,
He who redeemed Abraham:—
Never more shall Jacob be ashamed,
Nor his face turn pale,
For his children shall see the work of My hands
In their midst. They shall sanctify My name.
Yea, they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
And the God of Israel shall they fear.
Then shall they know, who erred in spirit,
And they that murmured shall be wise.

(Ch. xxix. 16-24.)

An indictment of the people's ways.

The moral state.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!
For Jehovah speaks:—
I have nourished and brought up children,
But they,—they rebel against Me!
The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass his master's crib,

But Israel knoweth not,
My people will not consider!

Ah! sinful nation!
Ah! people laden with iniquity!
Ah! seed of evil doers.
Ah! children that are corrupted!
They have forsaken Jehovah,
They have provoked the Holy One of Israel! *
Why should ye be stricken any more?
Ye revolt more and more!

The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart is faint!
From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head,
There is no soundness in it.
Wounds and bruises!
And fresh made sores!
They have not been pressed out or bound up,
They have not been mollified with ointment.

(Ch. i. 2-6.)

The religious state.

Hear ye the Word of Jehovah! ye rulers of Sodom.
Give ear to the teaching of our God! ye people of Gomorrah!
Of what use is the multitude of your sacrifices?
Jehovah says:—

I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams,
And of the fat of fed beasts.
In the blood of bullocks, and of lambs,
And he-goats, I have no delight!
When ye come to see My face,
Who has asked this at your hand?

* "They have gone away backward,"—an explanatory note.

To tread My courts—be done with it!
To bring Me offerings!
Worthless is your incense,
It is abomination to me!
The new moons, and Sabbaths,
The calling of Assemblies!
I am not able to bear it—
Iniquity and religion!

Your new moons, and feast times,
My soul hateth!
They are a trouble unto Me,
I am too weary to bear them.
So when you stretch forth your hands,
I will hide Mine eyes from you,
And when you make many prayers,
I will not hear you!

Your hands are full of blood!
Wash you, make you clean!
Put away the evil of your doings,*
From before Mine eyes?
Seek after what is just,
Punish him that oppresses!
Right the cause of the fatherless,
Defend the cause of the widow!

Oh! come, and let us understand one another!
Thus speaks Jehovah.
Though your sins are as scarlet,
Let them be white as snow!
Though they be red like crimson,

* Cease to do evil! Learn to do good!

Let them be white as wool!
If ye be willing and obedient,
Ye shall eat the good of the land.

But if ye refuse and rebel,
Ye shall be devoured by the sword.
For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

(Ch. i. 10-20.)

A lamentation over Jerusalem.

Ah! how she hath become a harlot!
The city that was faithful to Me!
Zion, which was filled with justice,
Where used to dwell the right!*
Thy silver is become dross,
Thy wine is mixed (with water).

Thy princes are rebels,
And companions of thieves.
They all love to receive gifts,
And follow after rewards.
They right not the cause of the orphan,
Nor defend the cause of the widow.

This is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth,
The mighty one of Israel.
Ah! I will rid Me of My foes,
And punish My enemies.
I will turn My hand upon thee,
Yea, thoroughly purge thee.

Thy dross I will take away,
And all thy alloy.
Yea, I will restore thy judges as at the first,

* But now murderers!

And thy councillors as in the beginning,
Then thou shalt be called—Righteous city!
A city that is faithful!

A promise.

For Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those who are come back to her by righteousness. Together shall be the destruction of sinners and transgressors, and of all that forsake Jehovah! (Ch. i. 21-28.)

The abandonment of tree worship.

Then shall ye be ashamed of the terebinths ye loved,
And confounded by the gardens ye chose.
For ye shall be as a terebinth, whose leaf fadeth,
And as a garden, which hath no water.
The strong one shall be as tow, his work as a spark,
And they shall burn together, no one shall quench it!
(Ch. i. 29-31.)

A word of warning to the women.

O, ye women that are at ease, arise!
Give ear to my voice!
O, ye careless daughters!
Attend to my word!
In a year and a day,
Shall trouble be on you, O careless ones!

For the vintage shall fail,
The summer fruit shall not come.
Tremble, be troubled, O careless ones,
Strip you, and make you bare!
Gird you with sackcloth,
And beat upon your breasts!

Alas! for the pleasant fields!
Alas! for the fruitful vines!
Alas! for the land of my people,
It is all covered with thorns!
Yea, alas! for all the homes of joy,
For the rejoicing city!

Because the palace is forsaken,
The crowded city is deserted!
Ophel and the watch tower are destroyed,
They are as dens for ever,
The joy of wild asses,
The pasture of flocks. (Ch. xxxii. 9-14.)

A bright vision of the end.

Until there shall be poured
Upon us the Spirit from on high.
Then shall the desert be a fruitful field
And the fruitful field be counted a forest.
Then justice shall dwell in the desert,
And righteousness in the fruitful field.

Yea, the work of righteousness shall be peace,
And the result of justice, security,
Then shall My people dwell in homes of peace,
And in secure dwelling places.
Happy then shall ye be who sow by all waters,
Who let the ox and ass untethered roam.

(Yea, even so shall it be in safety, when the forest is brought down by storm, and the city dashed into ruins.)
(Ch. xxxii. 15-20.)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Egyptian Alliance, and the Deliverance of Jerusalem (702-690).

The deposition of Shebna, the Prime Minister.

Thus speaketh Jehovah Sabaoth :—
Up get thee unto this Treasurer (and say),
What dost thou here? Whom hast thou here?
That thou hewest out for thyself a tomb here?
Thou! Who hewest out a lofty tomb!
Who makest in the rock a dwelling for thyself!

Behold! Jehovah hurls thee down,
Strong man! and rolls thee over!
Tossing thee about, He tosses thee,
As a ball into a distant land!
There shalt thou die, yea, there's thy grave!*
Thou shame of thy master's house!

His successor.

Yea, from thy place I am driving thee,
And from thy rank dismissing thee.
Then shall it come to pass in that day
I will call My servant Eliakim, Hilkiah's son,
And clothe him with thy robe of office,
And put thy sash upon him.

And thy government will I place in his hand,
He shall be a father to Jerusalem, and Judah's house,
I will lay on his shoulders the key of David's house

* The Hebrew for grave is here better than that for chariot.

And he shall open, none shutting, and shut, none opening.
Yea, I will fasten him as a peg in a firm place,
And he shall be a throne of glory to his house.

The failure of Eliakim.

And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring, and their descendants, all the small vessels, from the vessels of cups unto all the vessels of flagons. In that day, this is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth, the peg which was fastened in a firm place shall be drawn out, yea, it shall be forced out, and fall, and the burden, which was hung upon it, shall be destroyed. Because this is what Jehovah hath spoken.

(Ch. xxii. 15-25.)

The overthrow of Egypt declared (705 B.C.).

In the year that the **Tartan** came against Ashdod, when Sargon, the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against it, and took it (710 B.C.), Jehovah had told Isaiah, the son of Amoz, to go and take his mantle from his back, and to remove his sandals from his feet. Isaiah had done so, and had gone about without his mantle and his sandals. Then Jehovah said, "Just as My servant Isaiah has gone about these three years without his mantle and sandals, so shall it be a sign and a symbol concerning Egypt and **Ethiopia**. For thus shall the king of Assyria lead naked and barefoot the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, with their bodies exposed to the disgrace of Egypt. Ah! then shall they be afraid and ashamed on account of Ethiopia, on which they depend, and of Egypt, with which they ally themselves. And the inhabitant of the sea-coast shall say in that day, "Behold! such is the power

on which we depended, and to which we were going for help, in order to be delivered from the king of Assyria! And how can we now escape? (Ch. xx. 1-6.)

The folly of an alliance with Egypt.

Woe to the rebellious children, it is Jehovah's oracle!
They carry out a plan, that is not from Me!
They form an alliance, without My consent!
That they may add sin to sin.
They set out for Egypt, without asking Me,
To flee to Pharaoh's help, and Egypt's shelter!
That help shall be your shame! That trust your sorrow!
Though their princes are at **Zoan**, and their ambassadors at **Hanes**;
They shall all be ashamed of a people that cannot help,
A people that brings no help, but only shame and reproach.

An oracle concerning the "Wilderness of the South."

In the wilderness of the South, land of trouble, and anguish!
Where are lioness, and lion, viper and flying serpent!
They carry their goods on asses, their treasures on camels,
To a people that profits not, whose help is vain and futile,
(Therefore do I call her, "**Braggart** that sitteth still!")
(Ch. xxx. 1-7.)

Another warning.

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help,
Who trust in horses, and chariots, because they are many!
And on horsemen, because they are strong!
But do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek Jehovah!
Yet He also is wise, and brings misfortune,

And He recalls not His words.
Yea, He shall rise against the house of evil doers,
And against the help of the wicked.
For the Egyptians are men, and not God,
Their horses are flesh, and not spirit,
When Jehovah stretches out His hand,
The helper shall fall, and the helped together,
Yea, they shall all fall. (Ch. xxxi. 1-3.)

The Prophet's disappointment.

Now go home, write, yea inscribe it in a book
That it may remain for the later day, even for ever,
For this is a rebellious people, lying children,
Children that will not hear Jehovah's teaching,
Who say to the seers, See not!
To the prophets, Make not known to us the right!
Speak unto us smooth things! make known what is false!
Turn aside from the way! Leave the true path!
Cause the Holy One of Israel to go away from us.

Judgment pronounced.

Therefore saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye reject this word and trust in wile and policy, and depend on them, therefore this wrong doing of yours shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, as a bulging out on a high wall, to which breaking comes suddenly in a moment. Yea, it shall break as one breaks a potsherd, and dashes it to pieces, so that there will not be found a piece among its bits on which to carry fire from the hearth, or to bring water in from the well. For thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel:—

By returning and resting would ye have been saved,
In quietness and trust would have been your strength;

But ye would not, and said, No!
For upon horses we will flee! Flee then ye shall!
On the swift will we ride! Swift shall be they that pursue you!
At the war cry of five shall ye flee,*
Until that ye shall be left
As a beacon on the top of a hill
And as an ensign on a height. (Ch. xxx. 8-17.)

The Divine graciousness.

And therefore Jehovah longs to be gracious to you,
Therefore He raises Himself to show you mercy,
For a God of Justice is Jehovah,
Blessed are all those who trust in Him!
For O thou people, who dwellest in Jerusalem,
No more shalt thou weep!

He shall be gracious to thee, when thou criest,
Whenever He hears thee, He shall answer thee.
Though Jehovah gave you the bread of affliction
And the water of adversity,
Yet He shall no more remove thy teacher from thee,
Yea, thine eyes shall see thy teacher,
And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,
"This is the way, walk thou in it, whether to the right or left."

Then shalt thou defile the cover of thy silver images,
And the overlaying of thy golden idols;
Thou shalt treat them as unclean! Away, thou shalt say!
Then shall He give rain for thy seed, that thou mayest sow the land,

* The text has a repetition.

And the bread produce of thy land shall be rich and good.
Thy cattle in that day shall feed in broad pastures,
And the oxen, and the asses, that plow the land,
Savoury food shall eat, winnowed by shovel and fan.

Then shall there be upon every lofty mountain,
And upon every high hill streams of water,
In the day of a great slaughter, when towers fall.
The light of the moon shall be as that of the sun,
And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold,*
In the day He bindeth up His people's breach,
And healeth the hurt caused by smiting.

(Ch. xxx. 18-26.)

The overthrow of Assyria.

Behold! the Name of Jehovah comes from afar!
Aflame in anger, and in thick rising smoke!
His lips are full of indignation,
And His tongue is as devouring fire!
Yea, His breath is like a stream overflowing—
Up even to the neck, it reaches!
To sift the nations in a destroying sieve,
And with a bridle of error in the people's mouth.

Then to you there shall be a song,
As in a night of festival keeping,
And gladness of heart, like his who with flute
Comes to the Mount of Jehovah, the Hill of Israel.
Then shall Jehovah cause to be heard His loud voice
And show forth the descent of His arm,
With great wrath, and flame of burning fire,
Storm, and rain, and hailstorm.

* *i.e.* as that of seven days.

Yea, by the Voice of Jehovah shall Assyria be beaten down
(With His rod shall He smite him down ;)
And every blow of His staff shall be his doom
(As Jehovah lays it upon him).
It shall be with tabrets and harps,
And with mighty onsets that He attacks him.
A pyre has already been ordained for the **king**,
It has been made deep and wide,
Its pile is fuel and much wood,
The Breath of Jehovah, as a stream of brimstone, sets it afire.

(Ch. xxx. 27-33.)

The safety of Jerusalem.

This is the Word of Jehovah to me :—
As when a lion growls, and a young lion, over their prey,
Against them a band of shepherds is called out :
At their voice he fears not ! At their shouts is not alarmed !
Thus shall Jehovah Sabaoth defend Mount Zion, and His Hill.

As fluttering birds round their nest, Jehovah Sabaoth is round about Jerusalem,
Fluttering, He shall deliver it ! Passing by, He shall keep it safe !

A prayer of appeal.

Oh ! return ye unto Him, against Whom ye have deeply sinned, O children of Israel ! Yea, in that day shall every one cast away his idols of silver and gold, which your own hands have made in sin.

The doom of Assyria.

Then shall Asshur fall by the sword, no human one !
And the sword of no earth-born shall devour him !

Yea, he shall flee from before the sword,
And his warriors shall pay tribute.
Yea, his own stronghold he shall pass by in terror,
And his captains shall be afraid of their own flag!

This is the oracle of Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

(Ch. xxxi. 4-9.)

The Divine vengeance on Assyria.

Ah! thou crowd of many peoples!
Thou surging like the surging sea!
Ah! thou rushing of nations!
Thou rushing like the rushing water!
Lo! He rebukes them,
They fly, and are scattered!

As the chaff on mountain side before the wind,
As whirling dust before the whirlwind.
In the evening hour, see, the panic!
Before the dawn there is nothing left!
This is the portion of them that spoil us,
And the lot of them that rob us! (Ch. xvii. 12-14.)

Ah! thou land of buzzing insects!*
Thou that sendest envoys on the sea!
Even in papyrus boats over the waves,
"Go ye, swift messengers!"
To a people tall and polished,
To a nation feared far and wide.

To a people of power and war,
Whose lands the streams divide,
Ho! all ye that dwell on the earth,

* *i.e.* the land beyond the streams of Cush.

And inhabit the world!
When one lifts up a banner, see it,
When one blows a trumpet, hear it.

For thus has Jehovah spoken to me:
"I will calmly meditate in My place,
As the still heat in the sunshine,
As the moist mist in harvest time."

For before the harvest, when the blossom is over,
And the berry becomes the ripening grape,
He cuts off the shoots with the pruners,
And the branches he throws away.
Ah! they shall be left for the birds of the mountain,
And for the wild beasts of the country.
Ah! the birds shall summer upon them,
And the wild beasts shall winter upon them.

(Ch. xviii. 1-6.)

The great invasion of Sennacherib (701 B.C.).

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.

And Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria to **Lachish**, saying, "I have offended. Go away from me! That which thou puttest on me, will I pay." Then the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, king of Judah, three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the House of Jehovah, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the doors of the temple of Jehovah, and the door posts, which Hezekiah, king of

Judah had overlaid with gold, and gave them to the king of Assyria. (Ch. xxxvi. 1 ; 2 Kings xviii. 13-16.)

A picture of the ruin already caused.

Ah ! your land is a desolation,*
Your towns are burnt up with fire !
Your ground in your very presence,
Strangers devour it.
Ah ! the daughter of Zion is left
As a booth in a vineyard,
As a watch hut in a garden,
As a town all on watch !
Had not Jehovah Sabaoth
Left to us a remnant,
We should have been as Sodom,
And like unto Gomorrah ! (Ch. i. 7-9.)

The surrender of Jerusalem demanded (about 690-689 B.C.).

Then the king of Assyria sent the Rab-sâk from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army, and he took up his position by the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth to meet him Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was first minister, and Shebna, the secretary, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder. The Rab-sâk then said unto them:—

"Say ye now to Hezekiah, 'What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thinkest thou that a mere promise is counsel and strength for war? Now on whom dost thou trust that thou rebellest against me? Lo ! thou trustest on the support of this broken reed, on Egypt, which will wound and pierce the hand of any one that leans

* Ah ! it is a desolation like the destruction of Sodom.

upon it. Such is the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all that trust upon him! Now, therefore, take a wager from my master, the king of Assyria,—I will give thee two thousand horses if thou canst of thyself put riders upon them! How canst thou repel the attack of one of the least of my master's servants? And yet thou puttest thy trust on Egypt for chariots and horsemen! But if thou say to me, 'We trust in Jehovah, our God, is this not He whose high places and altars Hezekiah hath taken away, when he said to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before the altar here! Have I, do you think, come up to destroy this land, without the consent of Jehovah?

"Jehovah hath said unto me,

"'Go up against this land and destroy it.'"

Then said Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah unto the Rab-sâk, "Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it, and speak not unto us in the language of the Jews, in the hearing of the men upon the wall."

But the Rab-sâk replied, "Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee with this message? Is it not also for the men on the wall, who will have to suffer from the siege?"

Then the Rab-sâk stood up, and cried with a loud voice in the language of the Jews, saying, "Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you, neither let him make you trust in Jehovah, saying, 'Jehovah will deliver us! This city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria!' Hearken not to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria saith, 'Make terms of peace

with me, and come out to me, and ye shall every one eat of his own vine, and drink out of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread, and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, 'Jehovah will deliver us! Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered their land out of the king of Assyria? Ah! where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of **Sepharvaim**? Where are the gods of Samaria? Who are they of all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand—and you think Jehovah will deliver Jerusalem out of my hand!'"

Then they held their peace, and answered him not a word, for the command of the king was that no reply should be given. (Ch. xxxvi. 2-21.)

The Rab-sâk's second * message.

When the Rab-sâk returned he found the king of Assyria besieging **Libnah**, for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish. He had heard the report that **Tirhakah**, the king of Ethiopia, was coming to make war upon him, therefore he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying:—

"Thus shall ye speak unto Hezekiah the king of Judah, saying, 'Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold! thou hast already heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by dooming them to destruction, and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my father destroyed, **Gozan**, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden in Telassar? Where is the king of

* Or another version of the first message.

Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, and of **Avah**?'"

The conduct of Isaiah at this time.

Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Rab-sâk. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard them, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the House of Jehovah. Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna, the secretary, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth unto Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz, and they said unto him, "Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble and rebuke, and rejection; the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring them forth. Perhaps, Jehovah, thy God, will hear the words of the Rab-sâk, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words, which Jehovah, thy God, hath heard! Oh! do pray for the remnant that is left."

When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, he said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master:—

This is what Jehovah hath spoken to me,
Be not afraid of the words, which thou hast heard,
By which the servants of the king of Assyria have reproached Me.
Behold! I will send a spirit of fear into him.
He shall hear a report, and go back to his own land.
I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

(Ch. xxxvi. 22; xxxvii. 1-7.)

The prayer of Hezekiah.

When Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it, he went up into the House of Jehovah and spread it before Jehovah. Then Hezekiah prayed unto Jehovah, saying:—

O Jehovah Sabaoth! Thou God of Israel!
Who art enthroned upon the **Cherubim**!
Thou art He that is God alone
Of all the kingdoms on the earth!
Thou hast made heaven and earth.
Incline Thine ear, Jehovah, and hear,
Open Thine eyes, Jehovah, and see.
Yea, hear all the words of Sennacherib,
Wherewith he reproaches the living God.
Of a truth, Jehovah, the kings of Assyria
Have doomed all nations, and their land,
They have cast their gods into the fire,
For they were no gods, only the work of men's hands,
Wood and stone, therefore they destroyed them.
Oh! now Jehovah, our God! save us from his hand!
That all the kingdoms of the world
May know that Thou, Jehovah, art God alone.

(Ch. xxxvii. 8-20.)

The final message to Assyria.

Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus speaks Jehovah, the God of Israel, Inasmuch as thou had prayed to Me concerning Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, this is the Word, which Jehovah utters concerning him:—

She mocks thee! She despises thee!
The Virgin daughter of Zion.
She wags her head at thee,

The daughter of Jerusalem.
Whom hast thou reviled, and insulted?
And against Whom hast thou spoken?
Ah! thou raisest thine eyes on high,
Against the Holy One of Israel.
By thy servants thou hast insulted
Jehovah, and art saying:—
With my chariots I will ascend the highest hills,
The uttermost summits of Lebanon!
I will cut me down its lofty cedars,
And its choicest fir trees,
I will enter into its highest place,
Into the forest of its fruitful trees.
I will dig wells—even I alone,
And drink of strange waters,
I will dry up with the sole of my feet,
All the Nile waters of Egypt.

Hast thou not heard that long ago
I planned out all this?
That in former days I purposed this?
Now I have brought it to pass—
That thou shouldst lay waste towns,
Even make fortified cities a ruin,
And their inhabitants, all powerless,
Were dismayed and ashamed.
They were as the grass of the field, and tender herbs
As grass upon the housetops, and hillsides.
Full in My sight is thy rising and sitting,
Thy going out, and coming in.
I know thy raging against Me,
And thy boasting I have heard.

Ah! I will put My **ring** in thy nose,
And My bridle on thy lips,
And cause thee to go back by the way
Along which thou hast come. (Ch. xxxvii. 21-29.)

Thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria:—

He shall not come here into this city,
And he shall not shoot therein an arrow,
He shall not come against it with a shield,
Nor raise up against it a mound.
By the way by which he came,
By that shall he go back.
He shall not enter into this city,
This is the oracle of Jehovah.
Yea, I will circle round this town
In order to deliver it.
For the sake of My own self,
And of David, My servant.
(Ch. xxxvii. 33-35.)

A confirmation of the promise.

And this shall be a sign unto thee,
Ye shall eat this year that which grows of itself,
And next year that which springs from the roots,
Then in the third year ye shall sow and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat their fruit,
For the house of Judah shall take deep root,
And bring forth much fruit,
For out of Jerusalem goes a remnant,
And many escaped ones from Mount Zion.
The Zeal of Jehovah Sabaoth shall perform this.
(Ch. xxxvii. 30-32.)

The marvellous deliverance (690-689 B.C.).

Then the **angel** of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the

camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore, and five thousand, so that when they arose in the morning, lo! there they were all dead bodies. Thereupon Sennacherib moved his camp and departed. (Ch. xxxvii. 36-37[a].)

A national thanksgiving.

Then Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh also that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem to keep the **Passover** unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. And there assembled in Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, the king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem. (2 Chron. xxx. 1, 13, 26.)

The close of Hezekiah's reign (686 B.C.).

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made the Pool, and the Conduit, and brought the water into the city, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and **Manasseh**, his son, reigned in his stead. (2 Kings xx. 20, 21.)

The murder of Sennacherib (681 B.C.).

So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, returned and dwelt at **Nineveh**. And it came to pass that as he was worshipping in the temple of his god (**Nisroch** = **Adrammelech**) Sharezer his son smote him with the sword, and escaped into the land of Armenia. Then **Esarhaddon**, his son, reigned in his stead. (Ch. xxxvii. 37[b], 38.)

CHAPTER IX.

A Series of Oracles concerning the Future of Egypt, Babylon and Edom.

Concerning Egypt.

See! Jehovah rides on a swift cloud! He enters Egypt!
And the **no-gods** of Egypt tremble before Him!
Yea, the heart of Egypt melts within her!
For I will set Egyptians against Egyptians,
They shall fight one against another, man against man,
Town against town, and kingdom against kingdom.
The courage of Egypt shall fail within her,
And I will destroy her counsel.
They shall consult their no-gods and divines,
Those that have familiar spirits, and are wizards.
And I will give Egypt into the hand of a **cruel** lord
And a fierce king shall rule over them.
This is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth. (Ch. xix. 1-4.)

A vision of destruction.

Ah! the waters fail from the sea!
The Nile is laid waste, and is dried up!
The streams of it become stagnant,
Empty and dried up are the Nile canals!
The reeds and papyri wither away!
The meadows on the bank of the Nile,
All the cultivated plots of the Nile
Shall wither, become dry, and be no more.
Then shall the fishermen mourn,
And all lament that fish in the Nile,
They that spread their nets on its waters languish.

Those that work in fine flax * are confounded!
And those that weave it shall be ashamed!
All those that work for hire are grieved in their soul!

The princes of Zoan are at their wits' end,
The wise councillors of Pharaoh—a foolish council!
How can they say unto the Pharaoh,
"I am a son of the wise, a son of the ancient kings?"
Oh! where are thy wise men?
Let them declare, and tell to thee
What Jehovah Sabaoth hath planned for Egypt.

Fools are the princes of Zoan! Deceived the princes of **Noph**!
They have misled her, even Egypt's chief leaders;
Jehovah has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst,
Ah! they have misled Egypt in all her doings!
Even as a drunken man staggereth in his vomiting,
There shall be nothing more for Egypt to do,
Neither for head nor tail, palm branch or rush.

In that day shall Egypt be like women, and shall tremble and be afraid at the shaking of the hand of Jehovah Sabaoth, which He shakes over her. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt; whenever any one mentions it, they shall tremble, because of the Purpose of Jehovah, which He hath purposed concerning Egypt. (Ch. xix. 5-17.)

An oracle concerning Chaldæa (The Desert of the Sea).

As whirlwinds in the South sweeping along
From the desert they come, a land of terror!
A sad vision has been given to me.
The oppressor oppresses! The spoiler spoils!
Go up, Elam! Besiege, O Media!

* Those who work in white stuffs.

All the sighing do I end.
Ah! filled is my being with pains,
Pangs seize upon me as of a woman in travail.
I writhe at what I hear! Full of fear at what I see!
My heart faints! Terror affrights me!
The night I long for is turned into alarms.
They prepare the table! They spread the carpets!
They are saying, Eat! Drink!
Arise, ye captains. Get ready the shield!

For thus hath Jehovah spoken unto me,
"Go set a watchman! Let him tell what he sees!
And he saw a chariot, a team of horses,
A train of asses, a train of camels,
He listened, attentively he listened!
Then he cried aloud, "On the watch tower, O Jehovah,
I am standing, standing all day,
And in my post am I stationed all night."
When lo! there cometh a troop of men, a team of horses!
And he replied, and said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon!"
Yea, all the images of her gods are cast to the ground!
O my people, threshed out, and afflicted!
What I have heard from Jehovah Sabaoth,
The God of Israel, I have told to you. (Ch. xxi. 1-10.)

A second oracle concerning Babylon.

Upon a high mountain, lift up the signal,
Lift up the voice to them.
Wave the hand to them that they may come,
Into the gates of the nobles.
I myself have called for My wrath,
Those that are set apart for Me.

I have also summoned My warriors,
My proud rejoicing ones.
Hark! the tumult on the mountains,
Like unto a mighty people.
Hark! the shouting of the kingdoms,
Like unto gathered nations!
Jehovah Sabaoth is mustering,
The host for the battle.

They come from far-off lands,
Even from the end of heaven.
Jehovah, and the weapons of His wrath,
To destroy the whole earth.
Howl ye! for the day of Jehovah is near!
As destruction from the **destroyer** it comes!
Ah! then shall all hands be feeble,
Every heart shall melt, and be afraid!
Pains and pangs seize upon them,
They suffer as a woman in travail.
They shall be in terror one of another,
Their faces shall be as a flame of fire.

Behold! He comes, as a cruel one,
In wrath and indignation.
Making the earth a desolation,
And destroying their sinners from it.
Then the heavens and its constellations
Shall give forth no light,
The sun shall be darkened in its rising,
And the moon shall not shine.
Ah! I will punish the world for its evil,
The wicked for their wrong-doing.

I will end the arrogancy of the proud,
And cast down the haughtiness of tyrants.
I will make men scarcer than fine gold,
Yea, mortals than the gold of **Ophir**.

Ah! I will shake the heavens,
Aye, shake the earth out of its place.
In the wrath of Jehovah Sabaoth,
And in the day of His indignation.
Ah! they shall be as a hunted roe,
Like sheep without a shepherd,
Every one shall go to his own people,
They shall flee to their own land.
Every one that is taken shall fall by the sword,
Every one that is caught shall be slain.
Ah! their children shall be dashed in pieces,
Before their very eyes!
Their houses shall be plundered,
And their wives ravished! (Ch. xiii. 1-16.)

The Medians described.

Behold! I am stirring up
Against thee, the Medes,
They regard not silver,
Nor delight in gold.
They have bows and spears!
How cruel they are!
The young men and maidens,
They dash them in pieces!
Their eyes pity not the children,
And young babes they spare not.
Ah! then shall Babel, the glory of kingdoms,

The proud beauty of the Chaldees!
Be in state as when God overthrew
Sodom and Gomorrah.

It shall never be inhabited,
Never more shall it be occupied.
Ah! the Arabian shall not pitch tent there,
Nor shall shepherds make their folds there.
Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,
Their houses shall be full of jackals;
Yea, ostriches shall dwell there,
And wild goats shall leap there,
Wolves shall howl in their towers,
And hyenas in their halls of pleasure,
Ah! its time is near to come,
And its days shall not be long!

(Ch. xiii. 7-22.)

The future deliverance of Judah.

Jehovah shall have mercy on Jacob, and shall once more choose Israel, and settle them on their own land. Then strangers shall join themselves to them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the nations shall take them, and bring them to their own place, and the house of Israel shall have them in the land of Jehovah for servants and handmaids. They shall take captive those who had taken them captives, and they shall rule over those who oppressed them. Then shall it come to pass in the day that Jehovah shall have given thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage, wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this taunt-song against the king of Babylon, and say:—

The fall of Babylon.

Oh! how hath the oppressor ceased!
How hath the exactress ceased!
Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked,
The sceptre of the tyrant!

He who smote the nations in wrath,
And that without ceasing.
He who ruled the peoples in anger,
Persecuting them without end.

The whole earth is at rest, and quiet,
It breaks forth into singing,
Even the fir trees rejoice over thee,
The cedars of Lebanon (as they say),
Since thou wast laid low, no more
Comes up the feller against us.

Sheol from beneath rises before thee
To meet thy coming!
It stirreth up all the Shades for thee,
All the mighty ones of earth.
It moves up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.

They shall all answer,
And say to thee:—
Hast thou also become weak
Like unto us?
Is thy glory brought down to Sheol,
The noise of thy viols?
Ah! the worm is spread under thee,
And the worms cover thee.

Oh! how hast thou fallen from heaven,
Lucifer, son of the morning!
Oh! how art thou cast down to earth
Thou thrower down of nations!
Ah! thou saidst in thine heart,
"Up to heaven will I ascend,
Away above the stars of God,
Will I set my throne.

Yea, I will sit upon the **Mount** of the gods,
In the most distant north.
I will ascend above the highest clouds,
I will make myself like the Most High.
Ah! down to Sheol art thou hurled,
Down to the lowest grave!

They that see thee, gaze at thee in surprise,
They narrowly observe thee,
Is this the man that shook the world,
Who overthrew its kingdoms?
Is this he that made the earth a desert,
And destroyed its cities?
Who would not send his prisoners
Home to their own house.

The kings of the nations, every one
Lie at rest in honour,
But thou art cast out among the slain,
As one pierced by a sword.
As those that go down to the pit's bottom,
As a dishonoured corpse,
As one cast out from thy tomb,
As a disgraced scion! Clothed with shame!

Thy fathers are not together with thee,
Joined in the same tomb.
For thou hast destroyed thy land,
Thou hast harmed thy folk,
Never more shall they be named,
Who are the seed of evil-doers!
Prepare the slaughter for his sons,
For the guilt of their father.
That they may not rise and possess the earth,
And fill the world with cities.

Lo! I am up against thee,
It is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth!
And I am cutting off from Babel, name and remnant,
Son and grandson! It is Jehovah's oracle.
I will make it a possession for the bittern,
And for pools of water,
Yea, I will sweep it with a destroying besom,
It is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth.

(Ch. xiv. 1-23.)

The great day of Jehovah. Against Edom.

Come near, ye peoples, to hear!
And hearken, ye nations!
Let the earth hear, and all that it contains,
The world, and all its inhabitants!

Ah! the wrath of Jehovah is on the peoples,
And His fury on all their hosts!
He is utterly destroying them,
He is delivering them up to slaughter.

Ah! their slain are being cast out,
And their dead bodies—up goes their smell!

The mountains melt with their blood
And all the hills are dissolved.

The heavens are rolled together as a scroll,
And all their host are falling down,
As falls the leaf from off the vine,
And as the falling fig from a fig-tree.

For My sword is drunk with fury,
The sword of Jehovah in heaven,
See! it comes down upon Edom,
On a people set apart for doom.

A sword has Jehovah! It is full of blood,
It is moistened with fat,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of kidneys of rams!

Ah! Jehovah hath a sacrificial slaughter in **Bozrah**,
Aye, a great destruction in the land of Edom,
Then shall wild oxen be struck down together,
And bullocks and bulls side by side.

Ah! the land is soaked with blood!
And its dust moist with fat!
For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance,
And a year of recompense in Zion's cause.

Ah! its streams are turned into pitch
And its dust becomes brimstone,
For its land becomes pitch,
Burning by night and day!

It shall never be quenched,
Its smoke shall go up for ever.

It shall lie waste continually,
No one shall ever pass through it.

The pelican and the bittern shall possess it,
And owls and ravens shall dwell there,
Yea, He shall stretch out upon it,
The line of confusion, the plummet of emptiness.

As for her nobles ! *
Ah ! there shall be none to proclaim the kingdom !
Yea, all her princes shall be as nothing !

Ah ! thorns shall come up in all her palaces,
Nettles and brambles in all her forts !
She shall be a dwelling-place for dragons,
And a court for owls.

There shall wild cats meet the hyenas,
There shall the wild goat call to its fellow !
There shall the night monster rest,
And find for itself a place to roost.

There shall the arrow snake nestle, and lay,
Brood over and hatch its eggs,
There shall the vultures also gather together,
Every one with its mate.

Seek ye out from the book of Jehovah ;
Not one of all these faileth.
For the mouth of Jehovah, it hath commanded,
And His Spirit it hath gathered them.

Yea, He hath cast the lot for them,
And His hand hath divided it to them by line.

* This verse is completed in v. 11 in LXX. perhaps.

For ever and ever shall they possess it,
From age to age shall they dwell therein.
(Ch. xxxiv. 1-17.)

CHAPTER X.

A Series of Bright Anticipations of a Messianic Time.

A song of the latter day.

Oh! it shall come to pass in the latter days,
The Mountain of Jehovah shall be established,
Yea, the House of our God, on the top of the mountains;
And it shall be raised above the hills,
Then shall the nations flow unto it,
Yea, many peoples shall go to it (saying),

Let us go up to the Mountain of Jehovah,
To the House of the God of Jacob!
There shall He teach us concerning His ways,
And we will walk in His paths.
For from Zion goes forth the Teaching,
And the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.

Yea, rightly shall He judge between the nations,
And give decision to many peoples,
And they shall turn their swords into plow-shares,
And their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation against nation shall not lift up the sword,
And never more learn the art of war.
(Ch. ii. 2-4.)

A future hope concerning Assyria.

In that time shall homage be done to Jehovah Sabaoth by the people tall and polished, the people who are feared far and wide, a nation of power and war, whose lands the streams divide, even at Mount Zion, the place of the Name of Jehovah Sabaoth. (Ch. xviii. 7.)

And concerning Egypt.

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear by Jehovah Sabaoth. One of them shall be called **Ir Heres**.

In that day shall there be an altar unto Jehovah in the land of Egypt, and a **pillar** on its border unto Jehovah. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto Jehovah Sabaoth, in the land of Egypt. For they shall cry unto Jehovah, because of their oppressors, and He will send them a deliverer, and a helper, and he will rescue them. For Jehovah will be known to Egypt and the Egyptians will know Jehovah in that day; and they will worship Him with blood offerings, and meal offerings; yea, they shall vow vows unto Jehovah, and perform them. Jehovah hath smitten Egypt, but He who hath smitten it, will heal it! They shall return to Jehovah, and He shall be enquired of by them and heal them.

In that day there shall be a highway from Egypt to **Assyria**, and Assyria shall pass into Egypt and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall worship along with the Assyrians.

In that day Israel shall be a third along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; and there Jehovah shall bless, saying, "Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria, the work of My Hands, and Israel Mine inheritance. (Ch. xix. 18-25.)

The hope concerning Tyre.

In that day shall it come to pass that Tyre shall be forgotten for seventy years, the time of a royal dynasty. At the end of the seventy years it shall happen to Tyre, as in the "Song of the Harlot,"

Take up thy harp! Go about the town!
Thou harlot, that hast been forgotten!
Play sweet melodies! Sing many songs!
That thou mayest be remembered.

For it shall come to pass that after the end of the seventy years Jehovah shall visit Tyre, and she shall return to her commerce, and have intercourse with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth, but her profits and hire shall be dedicated unto Jehovah. They shall not be stored, nor treasured up. Her gains shall be for those who dwell before Jehovah, that they may have plenty to eat, and splendid clothing to wear.

(Ch. xxiii. 15-18.)

A great promise for David's house.

There shall come forth a shoot out of the root of Jesse,
And a branch shall grow out of its roots,
The spirit of Jehovah shall come down upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and of might,
The spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of Jehovah.*

He shall not judge after the seeing of his eyes,
Or decide according to the hearing of his ears.
He shall judge the poor in righteousness,
And decide in equity for the meek of the land.

* His delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah.

Yea, he shall smite the terrible with the rod of his mouth,
And slay the wicked with the breath of his lips.

Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
Then shall the wolf lie down with the lamb,
And the leopard lie down with the kid.
The calf and the young lion shall eat together,
And a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall be friends,
Their young ones shall lie down together.
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And the suckling play on the viper's hole,
Yea, on the den of the adder,
The weaned one shall put his hand. (Ch. xi. 1-8.)

The glory of reunited Israel.

They shall not hurt nor destroy
In all My Holy mountain,
For the land shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea,*
And in that day shall it come to pass,
That Jesse's root which stands as an ensign for the Tribes,
To it shall the nations seek,
And his resting-place shall be one of glory.
Yes, in that day shall it come to pass
That Jehovah shall the second time put forth His hand
To deliver the remnant of His people,
Those that remain, from Assyria and Egypt
(Even from **Pathros**, and Kush, and Elam,
From **Shinar**, and Hamath, and the **lands** of the sea).

* Habakkuk ii. 14.

Yea, He will set up an ensign for the nations,
And assemble the dispersed of Israel,
And the scattered ones of Judah gather,
From the four quarters of the earth.
Then the jealousy of Ephraim shall end,
And the adversaries of Judah be cut off.
(Ephraim shall no more be jealous of Judah,
And Judah no more oppose Ephraim.)
They shall fly on the shoulders of the Philistines seawards.
Together shall they spoil the people of the East,
Edom and Moab shall be seized by their hand,
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.
Then Jehovah shall destroy the tongue of Egypt's sea,
And shake His hand upon the River, with His mighty blast,
He shall smite it into seven shallow streams,
So that men may pass over it dry shod.
Thus there shall be a way for the remnant of His people,
Who remain from Assyria,
As there was for Israel
When they came out of the land of Egypt.

(Ch. xi. 9-16.)

The song of the restored people.

Then in that day thou shalt say :—

I praise Thee, O Jehovah ! Thou wast angry with me !
Thine anger is turned away ! and Thou comfortedst me !
Lo ! God is my salvation ! I will trust, and not be afraid.
For Jah is my strength and song ; He has become my salvation.

Then shall ye draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, and in that day shall ye say :—

Give thanks to Jehovah. Call upon His Name !
Declare His doings among the people !

Tell that His Name is exalted.
Sing to Jehovah, for He hath done great things.
Make this known through all the earth,
Cry aloud, and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion!
Great is the Holy One in the midst of Thee!
(Ch. xii. 1-6.)

The coming kingdom described.

Behold! a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule in justice.
They shall all be an hiding-place from the wind
And a shelter from the tempest;
Like rivers of water in a dry place,
Like the shade of a rock in a thirsty land.

Then the eyes of those who see shall not be closed,
And the ears of those who hear shall hear.
Yea, the mind of the rash shall truly perceive,
And the tongue of the stammerer speak distinctly.
No more shall the fool be called noble,
Nor the churl said to be generous.

A reflection.

For the fool speaketh folly,
And his heart planneth wickedness,
Practising hypocrisy,
And uttering error against Jehovah.
Leaving empty the soul of the hungry,
And causing the drink of the thirsty to fail.

The purposes of the churl are evil,
He deviseth wicked plans,
To destroy the poor with lying words,

Even when the lowly speak the truth.
But the generous plans kindness,
And by generous things shall he stand.
(Ch. xxxii. 1-8.)

A triumph song over the oppressor.

Woe to thee, thou oppressor, that hast not been oppressed,
And to thee, thou robber, that wast not robbed!
When thou ceasest to oppress, thou shalt be oppressed,
When thou endest thy robbing, thou shalt be robbed!

O Jehovah, be gracious unto us! In Thee do we trust!
Be Thou our arm every morning,
Our help in trouble.

At the noise of the tumult the peoples fled,
At Thy uprising the nations were scattered!
Yea, spoil is gathered, as the caterpillar gathers;
As the locusts run upon it, so do they run.

Exalted is Jehovah! He dwelleth on high!
He hath filled Zion with justice and righteousness.
The stability of thy times shall be His store of help,—
Wisdom and knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah.*

Behold! the mighty ones are weeping abroad,
The ambassadors are crying bitterly,
The highways are deserted! The traveller ceaseth!
The treaty is broken; its witnesses despised;
He regardeth no man!

The land mourns and languishes,
Lebanon is ashamed! It withereth!
Sharon has become like a desert,
And Bashan and Carmel cast their leaves.

* Added words, This is his treasure.

"Ah! now will I arise," saith Jehovah,
Now will I be exalted! Now will I lift up myself!
Ye shall conceive chaff, and bring forth stubble,
Your own breath is a fire, that shall devour you.

Yea, the peoples shall be as if burnt to lime,
As cut off thorns, which burn in the fire.
Hear ye that are afar off, what I am doing;
And ye that are near, acknowledge My might.

The sinners in Zion are afraid;
The impious are seized with trembling!
"Who of us can dwell with devouring fire,
Who of us can dwell with eternal burning?"

He that walketh aright, and speaketh in truth *
—Yes, he shall dwell on high,
Strong rocks shall be his defence,
His bread shall be given, his water sure.

He despiseth the gain of oppression,
He shaketh his hands against bribes,
He shutteth his ears, not to hear about crime,
And he closeth his eyes, not to behold evil!

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty,
They shall see a wide stretching land.
Thine heart shall think about the terror,
Where is he that counted? Where is he that weighed?

Where is he that counted the towers?
The strange people, thou shalt not see.
The people of an unknown tongue,
Stammering with words not understood.

* This line is defined in next stanza.

Look upon Zion the city of our solemnities!

Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem,
A peaceful habitation, a tabernacle that abides,
Her stakes shall never more be pulled out,
And her cords shall never more be broken.

For there Jehovah shall be our glory,
In place of broad rivers and streams.
No fleet of boats shall go thereon,
And no proud ship pass over it.*

For Jehovah is our Judge,
Jehovah is our Law-giver,
Jehovah is our King,
He will deliver us.

The abundance of spoil is divided,
The lame seize upon the booty;
Then the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick,"
The people, who dwell there, shall be forgiven their sin.
(Ch. xxxiii. 1-24.)

A song of bright anticipations.

The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad,
Yea, the desert shall rejoice and blossom,
Like the lily shall it blossom,
And rejoice, even with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The beauty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of Jehovah,
And the beauty of our God.

* The tacklings of such are loosed; the mast they could not support, the flag they could not spread.

Strengthen ye the feeble hands,
And confirm the knees that are weak!
Say to them that are of fearful heart,
Be strong! Fear ye not!

Behold! your God is coming!
He shall surely avenge you,
The recompense of God cometh!
He Himself is coming, and shall deliver you!

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,
And the ears of the deaf be unstopped,
Then shall the lame man leap as an hart,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.

For in the wilderness are waters breaking out,
And streams in the desert,
The mirage has become a lake,
And the thirsty land springs of water.

The place where jackals lay *
Is become a place of reeds and rushes.

Yea, a highway shall be there,
It shall be called, "The way of holiness,"
The unclean shall not pass over it,
And no erring fools travel therein.

No lion shall be there at all,
And no wild beast shall go thereon,
For the ransomed ones shall walk there,
And the delivered of Jehovah return there.

* Text mutilated here: verse defective.

Yea, they shall come to Zion with singing,
Everlasting joy shall be on their foreheads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(Ch. xxxv. 1-10.)

CHAPTER XI.

A Great Prophecy dealing with the Divine Judgment of the World.

A dark and terrible outlook.

Behold! Jehovah maketh the land empty and waste!
He turneth it upside down! He scattereth its dwellers!

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest,
As with the servant, so with the master,
As with the maid, so with the mistress;
As with the buyer, so with the seller,
As with the lender, so with the borrower:
As with the taker of usury, so with him who gives usury.

The land is utterly emptied and overthrown!
For Jehovah hath uttered this Word,
The land faints! It fades away!
The land fails! It fades away!
The highest princes of the earth fail!
For the land is corrupted by its dwellers!

They have broken the law, cast aside the statute,
They have broken the everlasting covenant.
For this doth the curse devour the land;

For this they suffer, who dwell upon it.
For this the people are burned with fire,
And few are the men that remain.

The wine-fruit faints! The vine fails!
All the merry-hearted ones sigh!
The mirth of timbrels ceaseth!
The shouting of the glad endeth!
The joy of the harp ceaseth!
No more drink they wine with a song!
Strong drink shall be bitter to those who drink it.

Broken down is the city—a chaos!
Every house is closed; no man entereth in!
In the streets there is a crying over the wine.
All rejoicing is made to cease,
The mirth of the land is gone.
In the town there is left desolation;
And the gate is battered into pieces! (Ch. xxiv. 1-12.)

The promise for the remnant.

Ah! thus shall it be in the midst of the land,
In the midst of the people, as at the shaking of olive trees,
As at the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done.
But these shall lift up the voice, they shall shout,
For the glory of Jehovah, they cry aloud from the sea,
Oh! glorify Jehovah afar in the rising of the sun,
The Name of Jehovah, God of Israel, in the lands of the sea!
From the borders of the earth have we heard songs,
"Glory for the righteous!"

But I say, For me is misery, misery! Woe's me
The robbers rob! Ah! they rob greatly!

Fear, the pit, the snare are upon thee, inhabitant of earth!
Whoso fleeth from the noise of the fear, falleth into the pit;
Whoso escapes from the pit is taken in the snare!
The windows of heaven are opened!

The foundations of the earth do shake!
Into pieces the earth is broken!
Into splinters the earth is splintered!
Tottering, totters the earth!
Reeling, it reels like a drunken man!
It shakes to and fro like a hammock!
Its rebellion lies heavy upon it,
And it falls, to rise again no more. (Ch. xxiv. 13-20.)

A Divine vindication.

Then shall it come to pass in that day,
That Jehovah shall judge the high ones in high places,
And the kings of the world on the earth—
They shall be swept as prisoners into a prison,
And shut up in the prison house,
And after many days shall they be judged.
Then shall the moon be confounded! The sun ashamed!
For Jehovah Sabaoth becomes King on Mount Zion,
And in Jerusalem! Before His elders is His glory.
(Ch. xxiv. 21-23.)

A great promise.

And on this mountain shall Jehovah Sabaoth
Provide for all peoples,
A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,
On this mountain shall He destroy
The veil, which veils all the peoples,

The covering which covers all the nations.*
Yea, Jehovah, our God, shall wipe tears from all faces.
The reproach of His people, He shall remove from the earth.
Jehovah hath spoken. (Ch. xxv. 6-8.)

A call to penitence.

Come, my people, enter into your chambers,
And shut your doors behind you.
Hide yourselves for a little moment,
Until His indignation have passed by.
For, see! Jehovah cometh out of His place,
To punish the guilt of the dwellers on earth,
Then shall the earth disclose its bloodshed,
And shall no more cover its slain.
(Ch. xxvi. 20, 21.)

A bright hope.

In that day Jehovah shall punish
With His sore and great and strong sword,
The Leviathan, the swift serpent,
The Leviathan, the coiled-up serpent.
He shall slay the great sea-monster.
In that day shall it come to pass,
Jehovah shall beat out His ears
From the River even to the Stream of Egypt,
And ye shall be gathered one by one, Children of Israel!
Yea, in that day shall it come to pass,
A great trumpet shall be blown,
And they shall come, who were lost in Assyria,
And the dispersed in the land of Egypt,
And they shall worship Jehovah on the Holy mountain in Jerusalem! (Ch. xxvii. 1, 12, 13.)

* He shall destroy death for ever.

A song of triumph.

Jehovah! Thou art my God!
I will exalt Thee; I will praise Thy Name.
For Thou hast done wonderfully,
Words spoken aforetime are fulfilled.

Thou makest the fortified town a ruin,
The defenced city a heap.
The town of the proud is no city,
It shall never more be built.

Therefore to Thee shall they give honour,
The strong nation, the town of peoples,
The tyrants shall fear before Thee,
Because Thou hast shown Thy power.

For Thou hast been a fortress to the weak,
A fortress to the poor in his distress.
A refuge from the storm! A shade from the heat!
And the boast of the proud Thou laidst low!

The blast of the terrible ones
Was like a storm against the wall.
It was as heat in a parched place—like heat
The boast of the tyrant hast Thou laid low.

(Ch. xxv. 1-5.)

Another song.

In that day shall it be said:—

Behold! here is our God!
We have waited for Him.
He has become our help,
We shall be glad and rejoice
In Him, who is our help.

For the Hand of Jehovah shall rest
Upon this mountain,
And Moab shall be trodden down under it,
Even as straw is trodden in the dunghill.

And he shall spread forth his hands in it,
As one that swimmeth
Spreadeth forth his hands to swim,
But he shall lay low his pride,
Together with the skill of his hands.

(For the fortress of the high fort of His walls hath He made low, and brought to the ground even to the dust.)

(Ch. xxv. 9-12.)

A melancholy meditation.

Hath He smitten it, as He smote its smiter?
Or hath it been slain, as those that slew it were slain?
By driving it away, by frightening it, does He contend with it?
Does He scare it by His rough blast in the day of the east wind?

Ah! thus has the guilt of Jacob been purged!
Ah! here is the result of taking away his sin!
They shall pound all their altars like chalk stones;
And their Asherim and Sun images no more shall rise!

The defenced city is desolate!
The home forsaken, and deserted like a desert!
There calves feed, and devour every branch.
The boughs are withered; they are broken off!

The women come, and set them on fire,
For they are not a people of understanding.

Therefore their Maker has no pity upon them,
And their Creator has no favour upon them.
(Ch. xxvii. 7-11.)

The song of Judah.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah :—

We have a strong city!
His help is ours for walls and bulwarks!
Open ye the gates!
That a righteous folk, who keepeth truth may enter!
The man of fixed purpose
Thou dost keep in peace, for his trust is in Thee.
Trust ye in Jehovah for ever,
For Jehovah is an eternal rock.
For He hath cast down
The dwellers on high, the lofty city,
He bringeth it down to the ground,
He layeth it low, even in the dust,
The feet of the poor trample upon it,
The steps of the humble.

The way of the just is a right way,
Thou makest a good way for the just.
In the way of Thy judgments, O Jehovah,
We have waited for Thee.
The desire of our soul is to Thy name
That we may praise Thee.
With my soul do I desire Thee *
And with my spirit do I seek Thee,†
When Thy judgments are on the earth
The inhabitants of the world shall learn the right.
If mercy be shown to the wicked,

* "In the night" omitted. † In the morning.

He learns not right, even in a land of goodness.
He still deals unjustly,
And cannot see the majesty of Jehovah.

Thy hand has been lifted up—they see it not!
They shall see it, and be ashamed.
Thy zeal for Thy people, O Jehovah!
Thy fire shall burn up Thine adversaries.
Thou wilt ordain peace for us,
For Thou hast wrought all our works for us.

O Jehovah, our God! beside Thee
Other lords have had dominion over us!
Only in Thee (would we trust)! We would praise Thy Name!
The dead shall not live again! The shades do not rise!
Because Thou hast punished them.
Thou hast destroyed them,
And made all memory of them to perish.

Thou increasest Thy folk! Thou art glorified!
Thou enlargest all the bounds of the land.
In trouble we sought Thee, in our distress
When Thy chastening was upon us.
Even as a woman in travail, whose time is near,
Cries out in her pain,
So were we before Thee, O Jehovah,

We were travailing, we brought forth wind,
We wrought no good for the land,
Neither were the dwellers on earth born!
Thy dead shall arise! * They shall awake and sing,

* "Their dead bodies" omitted.

Those that were dwelling in the dust!
For Thy dew is a dew of lights,
And the land shall bring the shades to birth.
(Ch. xxvi. 1-19.)

The song of the vineyard.

In that day they shall say :—

Sing ye of My much loved vineyard.
I, Jehovah, am its keeper.
Every moment I water it.
Lest any one hurt it,
By night and by day I guard it,
And wrath I never have to it.

Were there set against Me,
Briers and thorns,
War would I wage against them,
I would burn them up together.
Or let them seize on My protection
And make peace with Me.
(Ch. xxvii. 2-5.)

A closing promise.

In the latter day Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and bud, yea, they shall cover the earth with fruit.
(Ch. xxvii. 6.)

DIVISION II.

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH READ IN THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAPTER I.

The Historical Conditions of the Prophet's Ministry, and its Duration.

The opening verse of the book of the prophecies of Isaiah, as it now lies before us, gives us the information we seek about the time, during which the prophet lived and flourished. His ministry began just as King Uzziah was closing his reign. This sovereign had had a long, and for many years an illustrious career; but his prosperity had passed under a cloud, and he ended his days in darkness. During the latter years of his reign the powers of government had been entrusted to his son Jotham, as regent. Now in the year that Uzziah died, and Jotham became king—at a time when the earthly throne of Jerusalem was losing one and receiving another occupant—Isaiah received his vision of the heavenly Throne filled with its perpetual occupant, and surrounded by its transcendent glory. With this vision of the King, the Lord of Hosts enthroned in glory, Isaiah received his call to office. The exact year of this important event is almost

absolutely determined; for it took place about the year 740. The sad close of Uzziah's reign, and the absence of any outstanding quality in the character of Jotham, that might give the promise of good things, would certainly very deeply impress the people and the prophet alike with the imperfections of even a Davidic king. During the half century of Uzziah's reign Jerusalem had enjoyed a large measure of prosperity—indications of which the prophet gives in his earliest prophecies (p. 22)—but a prosperity which brought the people into perilous relations with the idolatrous tribes of the East. Both on the part of the king and the nation, there followed that overweening confidence in human resources, success so often brings about; and their hearts were lifted up in rebellion against God. The claims and prerogatives of Jehovah were forgotten and dishonoured; the worship of Jehovah was largely departed from; and leprosy seized the king, while indifferentism dulled the people's religious sensibilities. In such circumstances Isaiah spent his youth; to lift up his voice on behalf of Jehovah, and to protest against all indifferentism was he called forth. And this just as Jotham assumes full kingly authority—a man whose life was marked by no great sin, nor by any signal act of devotion to Jehovah. "He entered not into the Temple of the Lord." The people continued unrestrained and unrebuked: still they did corruptly. The king performed no act of reparation to Jehovah. He simply abstained from Uzziah's great sin. Jotham's reign was, however, one of external prosperity. But with his death a crisis is brought about in the history of the people of Judah by the accession of an openly idolatrous king like unto Ahab, even Ahaz. Great activity characterised Isaiah during this sad reign, when the Divine honour was so much called in

question. Ahaz reigned about sixteen years, and during that time the prophet passed through varied experiences. Although he played at first a most conspicuous part in fully and faithfully declaring the mind and will of Jehovah to the king, and condemning his foreign alliances and sinful fear, yet in the later years the prophet, rejected by the court, must have been largely living in retirement, labouring among his disciples, and waiting for the morning. This came with its brightening dawn in the death-year of Ahaz, when a king of noble promise, a friend and pupil of the prophet's own, a true Davidic king, ascended the throne of his father. This year of Hezekiah's succession, consequently, is marked by another striking manifestation of prophetic activity. The night's weeping was now over, and the joy of the morning encouraged the prophet to appear once more before the public, to utter messages concerning all the immediate neighbours of Jerusalem, and very especially concerning that great Northern Empire, which, like a mighty wave, was now sweeping everything—every human resistance—before it. The great question was at that time being asked, "What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation?" Ambassadors from all parts would doubtless come with many inquiries to Jerusalem concerning the future policy to be followed. To all these the prophet had as his answer in God's great Name with hope and confidence:—"Jehovah hath founded Zion and in her shall the poor ones of His people take refuge." But surrounded as Hezekiah was by courtiers trained in the time-serving school of Ahaz—men wholly incapable of seeing what the prophet saw, or of acting as the prophet enjoined—he found himself entangled in endless complications and notably in the matter of an alliance with Egypt.

Isaiah pointed out to Hezekiah that his duty was to regard Jehovah as his salvation and all his desire, urging that even from a worldly point of view the safety of Jerusalem lay in a policy of absolute neutrality. The great issues of the world's secular history were then being fought out by three great World-Powers—Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. Jerusalem had been chosen by Jehovah as His throne, and entrusted with the highest of trusts—even the preservation of a pure religion and a Messianic Hope. She would only drag her sacred trust into the mire, if she allied with any of these powers; and thus bring upon herself the dire vengeance of the power she slighted. Geographically, too, she was so situated as to remain safe in her limited territory and mountain citadel; if she were willing she could calmly see the wave of war pass by without its even touching her. But foolishly, nay wickedly,—for it was in distinct disobedience to the Divine command declared by Isaiah,—she came down into the arena of a human diplomacy, and refused to place her supreme trust in God. This grieved Isaiah much; but he was divinely sustained, for he was commanded to proclaim that Assyria would not overthrow Jerusalem. However near this power should come—even at the very gates it would be overthrown. And this great and signal deliverance Isaiah saw with his own eyes. Once already Sargon had devastated the northern provinces in the early years of Hezekiah's reign; and yet once again a mighty host under a yet mightier monarch, Sennacherib, with yet greater parade and boast, gathers some ten years later for the capture of Jehovah's city. It was in vain. Jehovah was still a wall of fire around His people, and in some measure still the glory in their midst. Soon after Hezekiah dies; and in the strange, but only too common alternation of events, a wicked

king succeeds a righteous one. Isaiah's hopes seem suddenly dashed to the ground; but even out of the very ashes, Phœnix-like, he rises. And God, we may well believe, used him in his old age to speak in earnest words of a coming day of deliverance. But such a man was a marked man. Hence, when Manasseh caused Jerusalem to swim with the blood of the saints (2 Kings xxi. 16), it is only too sadly possible that the prophet met a martyr's death. His work, however, was done, and well done. For fifty years he had served his generation faithfully, being during that time "the inspired soul and acting conscience of Jerusalem."

CHAPTER II.

The Call, Consecration and Commission of the Prophet.

The beginning of Isaiah's public ministry may be dated about 740 B.C., about ten years or so after the accepted date for the foundation of Rome. Its beginning comes in a Vision of God, which from its supreme importance, supplied those views and conceptions of the Divine character, that, as we shall see, became dominating elements in all his life-work. But nothing is told us about the lineage, or birthplace, or earlier days of the prophet. In this case, as so continually in the case of God's distinguished servants, the man in his own private life and history is subordinate to his work and message. He comes before us on the threshold of his opening career, and he tells us himself about a most interesting and

impressive experience through which he passed. As, however, we note his access to the royal court, and the large influence he exerted, especially in connection with the education of Hezekiah, we feel that there must be some truth in the tradition that connects him with the royal house of David. And then Jerusalem was the scene and centre of his life-long ministry. He is never represented as going beyond its walls, or lifting up his voice as Micah, partly his contemporary, partly his successor, did in the provinces. Hence probably Jerusalem was his birthplace and home. The heroic faith, earnest purpose, and the divinely given insight he had into the real needs of his people, were all expressed in most eloquent and appealing words, in the capital of his country, and brought to bear on the very heart of his nation.

In our authorised collection of Isaiah's prophecies, the great inaugural vision is not found at the opening of the book, as might have been expected, but later. From this circumstance, and also from the somewhat disheartening terms in which his commission is given, it is generally taken that while the actual vision was vouchsafed at the opening of his ministry, it was put into writing a good many years after, when the prophet found somewhat of his early enthusiasm damped by the coldness and opposition of his hearers. We thus would see in this vision simply the great Divine command to go and speak in God's high Name to Judah. This was his commission—this in its grand fulness and significance without mention of detail. To our mind we would in this way get nearer to the heart of the prophet, and judge more correctly the historical conditions of the inaugural vision.

The death year of King Uzziah was the date of the vision. Doubtless Isaiah would be impressed by the events attending the closing of this king's reign, and anxious concerning the future of his people. Changes in the reigning house as affecting the fortunes of David's family and Jerusalem, the city of David, would be of moment to this young man of noble birth, and truest patriotism. An earthly throne had been emptied, but as Isaiah was engaged in devout meditation, perhaps in the Temple courts, he has a vision of the eternal Throne that is never empty. He sees Jehovah Sabaoth, his God and the God of his people, as supreme King, sitting upon His throne in all His glory, amid resplendent majesty of surrounding circumstance. This thought of the kingship of God, in His sovereignty and supremacy over all nations, even over boastful Assyria, becomes a controlling thought with our prophet, which, in season and out of season, he firmly and with gladness proclaims. The glory of Jehovah as King Isaiah now sees, and sees never more to forget. This vision abides with him in all his work.

But what seems even more to impress the prophet is the revelation he now receives of the perfect and complete holiness of Jehovah. The absolute purity of Jehovah, as the Holy One of Israel, becomes henceforward a dominant note in his teaching. The glory of God is not alone one of might and power, filling all things, it is, and this most of all, one of essential and fundamental holiness. Largely among heathen conceptions of God is found the idea of power, of force, as a great irresistible fate bearing down all opposition. Might not right is God. But to Isaiah right is seen enthroned in the very heart of the Eternal, and he can always proclaim righteousness and holiness as the true

foundations of lasting empire. The Divine Holiness is purity and rightness. Hence there comes to the prophet a deep sense of his own personal demerit, and a keen conviction of national sin and transgression. Neither they nor he are at present fit vessels or instruments for the Master's service. And the particular form in which this sense of sin expresses itself, as a sin of the lips, is worthy of our attention. This is the conviction that God's word is pure, pure because it is the expression of purity. But man's word is impure, because it is the expression of a heart that needs purging. This penitent confession no sooner pours itself out than it is met by a very gracious revelation of the way in which God deals with man. He sees, first of all, as on this a great spiritual birthday, an act of grace performed in his own personal experience; he is touched by God, and in being so touched is there and then forgiven freely and fully. What God thus does for him, He may do for his people also. In this a supreme hope takes its rise. Judah and Jerusalem may be purged! How joyful the vision! The consciousness of all this moves him with a new strange emotion, and pardoned himself, he knows that he is being called of God to proclaim pardon to his people. This emotion cannot abide alone; it is a fruitful and germinal force in the spirit life of the prophet. Thus it is followed by the hearing of the Divine call to service. That call is only heard by one, who has had experience of the actual grace of God; and such hearing is necessarily followed by obedience. The opened eye that has seen God, and the opened heart that has received pardon, are soon followed by the opened ear that hears only to obey.

Such hearing is the important element in the prophetic

preparation. The quickened spirit enters into sympathy with the need of God. It feels that God requires a spokesman as messenger of His pardoning, purging grace; and in a glad surrender, never to be recalled, it says, "Here am I! send me!" Actually then in this moment Isaiah by solemn constraint and fixed purpose dedicates himself to the work to which God now sends him. The strength necessary for such service comes through the sense of a Divine call, acceptance and commission. Isaiah is now a prophet of Jehovah, to tell forth, even from his own glad experience, God's love and grace to those who like him will avail themselves of such blessings. To a people, who would be willing to have this holy God for King and Ruler, Isaiah has brightest promise to declare.

And was not his own name a happy confirmation of all this? For the name "Isaiah" tells out the truth that Jehovah is Salvation. His sons' names were afterwards to be signs and embodiment of his teaching. Surely now his own name was best and most hopeful sign. And our prophet goes forth as a preacher of salvation. The Divine "Go, and speak to this people" is his commission. If we leave over the somewhat sad and despondent words, so usually associated with this commission, to the time when they were written, can we not see our prophet starting forth in hope and enthusiasm upon his great career? We feel constrained to think that it was this that he did, in reliance on God. And as we recall the various efforts to read as hopeful and bright thoughts out of the terms of the commission as possible—efforts brave but futile, for the words, as they stand, tell only of disappointment, are we not convinced that at the back of them all lies this clear consciousness, that Isaiah started on his glorious course

full of brightest hope, that what he had experienced might be the experience of Jerusalem? However impossible it may be to make the words in the Hebrew yield this sense, the deep conviction has shown itself that the commission of the prophet must surely have sent Isaiah forth to proclaim salvation, based on the pardoning grace of Jehovah. Hence he might go to stand, brave and unflinching, in Jehovah's strength, against all forms of human opposition, confident through his own experience of what God has done for himself, that Jehovah could do great things for a willing and obedient people.

CHAPTER III.

The Earliest Preaching of Isaiah in the Reign of Jotham and the First Years of Ahaz (740-725 B.C.).

As arranged in our present canon the first book of Isaiah extends from chapters i. to xii. We have already taken out the sixth chapter, and shall treat chapter i. later, while the opening hymn of chapter ii. vv. 2-4 belongs to the Messianic hope. Beginning thus with chapter ii. 5, we have a series of passages here gathered together in the text on pages 22-32, which we must regard as giving to us the earliest preaching of our prophet. They form one homogeneous whole. Probably we have in these the heads and main points—a summarised statement of Isaiah's prophetic work in the first years of his ministry, written down for us at a later period partly by himself, partly probably by one of his disciples. These passages were

afterwards edited, and with the addition of other prophecies gathered together, form the first collection of Isaiah's words.

In the passages now lying before us we discover the prophet's attitude to Jerusalem on his first appearance, and very particularly his appreciation of the circumstances and condition of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, now fast approaching its dissolution. The House of Jacob is specially the kingdom of Samaria, and its God-forsaken, idolatrous state is very graphically brought before us in the words of a most earnest appeal. But, doubtless, the sins here so denounced were found rampant not only there, but in Judah also. The result of the military achievements of Jeroboam II. and Uzziah was an increase of idolatry, luxury and witchcraft. The trust of the people was not in Jehovah, but in wealth, and idols made by their own hands. Prosperity had not been a gain to religion, and the simpler life of earlier days had now almost passed away. Hence it is the first business of our prophet to recall men to thoughts of Jehovah's glory, and of that day, of which all the prophets speak, when in holiness He shall be truly exalted. The supremacy of Jehovah, and the nothingness of idols are here boldly declared. "In that day," and we shall notice how common a phrase this is right through Isaiah's prophecies, the glory of Jehovah shall be seen in a perfect vindication of righteousness, which must be universal. Everything wherein man had been putting his trust, everything which had thereby been detracting from the honour due to God alone, must be seen in its utter insignificance. The folly and failure of all human resource, apart from the Divine blessing, is powerfully declared, as the prophet scans all the pomp and pageantry of kings and peoples, and sees it all bowing down even to the ground.

In view of all this a most earnest warning is addressed to Jerusalem, the condition of which was most provocative of the Divine anger. God appears as judge, and enters into judgment with the rulers and princes, who had brought so much trouble on His vineyard. Isaiah mentions the absence of justice and the oppression of the poor as among Judah's greatest sins. It was his concern to denounce all such social wrongs. The luxury of the times is seen in the extravagance of dress and ornament among the high-placed ladies of the court. Upon these evil things Isaiah pours out his keen invective. In a series of seven woes he brings home a sense of shame and guilt to every class, to every rank, and to both sexes. He presses in upon every conscience the wickedness of their doings. What burning words are these, which we have in these successive woes, and how powerful must have been the addresses in which these were emphasised and amplified! Land covetousness, drunkenness, presumption, perversity, conceit, corruption, oppression—ah! these seven great wrongs, how they eat, as does a cancer at a nation's vital parts! How deadly they are to all well-being! But how especially antagonistic are they to any conception of Jehovah as supreme in justice, or righteousness, as the Holy One of Israel, as Isaiah had been taught to think of Him in his great vision. Every one of these sins, then, must be felt, and confessed and abandoned by the people, if they would enjoy God's favour.

For already the prophet sees God's hand stretched out in dreadful judgment—a stretching out by which he explains the calamities that are abroad in the earth. To these judgments, in six passages, he draws attention. Can it be that men do not see and feel as he does? Do men

not understand that all this means warning, and comes for remedial purposes? First, he notes the failure of harvest crops, severe famine, and intense suffering on every hand. Secondly, he sees the havoc wrought by war, as Syrians and Philistines devastate the land—all this already falling in dread force on Ephraim, but Judah's turn was bound to come, if evil ways remained. Thirdly, the leaders of the land are being cut off, and the nation is being left to bad and hurtful guidance, self-seeking and hypocritical leaders. In the fourth scene of judgment internecine strife prevails. Ephraim and Judah, who ought to be brothers and true allies, are deadly enemies. But great though these evils were, the prophet sees in his fifth scene still greater. The Assyrian wave of invasion is every year coming nearer. It may be far away as yet, but let men be warned in time! For in the sixth scene a mighty, irresistible invasion is described in all its terrors. How pathetic are the words which tell of woe and lamentation—the moaning of the sea, the eclipsing of all glad light. "Then the times grew to such evil" that Divine protection had disappeared. All this is God's strange work, but ever rendered so necessary by human callousness, and indifference to righteousness.

Were men and nations only to return to God, the hand stretched out in judgment might be drawn back, and opened in blessing. To those that survive the troubles, and learn their meaning, brighter days must come. Chastisement will be a great means of purging, and once again in Jerusalem will God become His people's shield and shelter. What the Shekinah Cloud and the Pillar of Fire had meant in days gone by, all that again God could, and would be to an obedient and ransomed people. Were Jehovah only honoured by deeds of justice, and of loving-kindness, in

a truly penitent people, would He not prove Himself a complete and adequate protection from every foe?

In the "Song of the Vineyard" the prophet uses a beautiful figure to set forth the covenant relation between God and His people. Already has the figure been used, again it will be used (p. 118), while in the teaching of Christ it will be taken advantage of for a similar purpose—even to tell of the privileges with their attendant responsibilities, conferred in grace on Jerusalem. God has a special interest in His chosen people; they are to Him as a choice Vine, in which He takes delight. But this means highest responsibility and obligation; it holds them bound to return loving service, most appropriate fruit. In this Jerusalem grievously fell short. God found not what He wanted, nay, alas! He found its exact opposite. All this the prophet describes most forcibly by his play upon certain Hebrew words. He looked for justice, but found injustice; for right, but found might. Even this vineyard, then, may have to be abandoned for another; for Divine favour always goes along with, and requires moral conditions. Jerusalem can only be God's, when it is good; only inviolable, when it does right. Men have not always remembered that privilege spells responsibility, and that there is no right apart from duty.

CHAPTER IV.

The Policy of King Ahaz. Judah and Assyria (735-715 B.C.).

The accession of Ahaz was a dark day for Jerusalem, and as it cast its deepening shadows over the land, our prophet

was roused to a most vigorous activity. The policy of king and prophet was now to be brought into sharp and striking contrast—a contrast not peculiar to any one age. Isaiah now proclaims the duty of placing supreme trust in Jehovah alone and avoiding all forms of alliance with the great world-powers. The full name of the king, who now begins to reign in 735 B.C. was Jehoahaz, a name significant of a Divine holding fast; but as the first part of his name is dropped, we may find in this an embodied proof of his having forsaken Jehovah, and placed his reliance on the aid of Assyria. Like Ahab, of the house of Omri, Ahaz patronises foreign idolatries. And as Elijah was specially commissioned to condemn the idolatrous king of the Ten Tribes, so now our prophet is divinely commissioned to confront the king of Judah, and point out the error of his ways.

It is not easy to date the year of the death of King Ahaz. He may have reigned as sole king for sixteen years, *i.e.* from 735 to 720 B.C. when his son Hezekiah perhaps became regent, dying some five years later, when Hezekiah would receive the title of king (715 B.C.). The forms of idolatrous practice followed by the kings of Samaria were continued by Ahaz, such as the worship on the High Places, and under every green tree. But he favoured in some striking manner the cruel and obnoxious worship of Moloch, especially the offering up of children to the fiery arms of this false deity. This was done in Gehinnom, truly a valley of groaning, which was afterwards known as Gehenna, and made a place of refuse for the city, and with its undying worm, and unceasing fire a type of the severest form of condemnation (Matt. v. 22). In addition to this we find Ahaz later influenced by the splendid altars of

Nineveh, thus proving himself wholly out of line and sympathy with the best traditions of David's house.

Judah at this time was hard beset by an alliance between Samaria and Syria. Pekah was the contemporary of Ahaz as ruler over Israel, while Rezin reigned in Damascus. This combination caused much alarm in Jerusalem, especially in the royal court, and in the government. Eloth at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, an important place of commerce, whence ships traded with all parts of the Red Sea, had belonged to Judah in Uzziah's reign, but now by the help of Syria it had been handed over to Edom. This help of Syria doubtless encouraged both Edomites and Philistines in making raiding excursions into the territories of Judah. In these circumstances Ahaz resolved upon a policy, which was to be supremely hurtful to Jerusalem in the long-run. He entered into negotiations with Tiglath Pileser, the powerful and ambitious king of Assyria, thereby entangling Judah in the political combinations of the time. Pileser, or Pul, as he is called, was eager to secure a footing in Palestine, and therefore was only too glad to welcome the approaches of Ahaz. The king of Judah purchased Assyria's help at far too dear a price, even using the gifts offered to Jehovah for this purpose. Assyria at once moves against Damascus, and in 732 B.C. captures this ancient city, putting Rezin to death. But the wrath now falling on one would soon fall on Samaria, and these buffer states being reduced, what could prevent Assyria threatening even Jerusalem? Ahaz went to Nineveh to do homage to his powerful ally, and while there he saw a splendid altar the pattern of which he sent to his high priest Urijah. This courtier-priest accepts with servile sycophancy this intrusion of the civil power into ecclesiastical matters. Well would

it have been if a faithful priest had now been ministering at Jehovah's altar, one who might have been a true fellow-worker with Isaiah, and prevented their king from further pursuing his hurtful policy, thereby bringing ruin on his country, and dishonour on the name of Jehovah, the God of Zion. The foolish compliance of this time-serving priest boded ill for the civil power.

The moment Isaiah heard about the proposed embassy to Assyria he appeared before the king with earnest and urgent protest. The state of panic into which king and court had fallen was grief indeed to the prophet. It betokened the alarm felt by those who had given up their trust in Jehovah. Isaiah appears before the king in the most public manner at a spot where perhaps he along with his ministers had gone to view the defences of the city, and the arrangements for the water supply in the event of a siege. On that spot, not many years after, were to be heard the insulting reproaches of Assyria's chief commissioner. This second episode might have been prevented if Ahaz had only acted differently now. But the "might have beens" of history are a sad and numerous list.

Interest attaches to the little son of the prophet, who now accompanies his father, and who bears the striking name Shear-Jashub, which being interpreted means "The remnant shall return." The thought embodied in this name was dear to Isaiah. We find it expressed several times, notably in the words of ch. x. 21 (p. 54). Isaiah, when impressed deeply with some great prophetic testimony not only uttered it, but embodied it even as Hosea had done, so that it might remain in abiding form in the names of his sons. Later on we have Maher-shalal-hash-baz, named in connection with the circumstances of this time, and doubtless Shear-

Jashub would bear testimony to the deep prophetic conviction already expressed in Jotham's reign that amid all opposition and persecution God had His own remnant, those who survived and remained, and who did not bow the knee to any Baal. The presence of this son was itself visible representation and clear demonstration to Ahaz of Isaiah's calm confidence in Jehovah, and of the prophet's firm belief that God would always protect His people who put their trust in Him. Now the folly of being afraid of the alliance between Syria and Samaria is declared. The prophet sees the coming destruction of Syria taking place in a few brief years, and he is sadly persuaded, that if Samaria continues her course of intrigue with Syria and Egypt her time to remain would not be long. Both these powers, Syria and Samaria, are played out, they are like torches slowly smoking out, and need cause no alarm at all to Jerusalem. Syria had but two or three years now to continue, Samaria some twelve or thirteen. For in 722 B.C. Samaria fell before Sargon, and at the close of the sixty-five years here suggested in a note, was completely colonised by Asur-bani-pal, an event to which reference is made in Ezra iv. 10, about 670 B.C.

To confirm his words concerning the speedy overthrow of Samaria, Isaiah uses, as his wont is, a striking play upon words which cannot be expressed in English. Two words in Hebrew with a similar sound, but with different meaning, are used to emphasise important teaching. Man must hold fast to God, if God is to hold man fast, only he who confides in God abides; only "he who has faith has staith," or standing sure. Ahaz and Isaiah stand here in direct opposition. The one represents a worldly diplomacy, which ignores God; the other enforces trust in God, as the essential

element of a true permanence. To do the will of God secures the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

In the presence of the prophet, and notwithstanding all his entreaties, Ahaz remains unbelieving and contemptuous. He will neither believe what is said, nor interest himself so far as to ask for a sign. His attitude is intensely disappointing to man, and grievous also to God. But the prophet's heart is still throbbing with a great hope for the house of David, even though so sadly and unworthily represented in the person of Ahaz. His firm conviction is that God is with His people, and that others may share this belief with him. Hence, he declares, in a very short time a son should be born, who should have this belief embodied in his name. We cannot now tell to what glad mother the prophet pointed, whether his own wife, or some mother of the royal house, but this we know that the birth of a son with such a name in a brief course of months was to be a sign to Ahaz that God was with His own, guarding them, and fulfilling His word by His servant in the overthrow of their enemies. How gladly would Isaiah embody his own faith in such a living proof of his conviction! His words might well serve as suggestion and guidance to many, as he would give thus a new stimulus to their faith and hope. And we all know how eagerly St Matthew in accordance with Jewish traditions claimed this great name Immanuel, with a meaning for him surpassing what it had for Isaiah, as best and fittest name for Jesus, who in the highest and noblest sense has proved and revealed the union of God with a redeemed humanity. Continually this evangelist, especially as writing a Gospel full of appeal to Jewish readers, finds in the life of Christ fulfilment of truths

first and primarily fulfilled in the olden time. The sign to Ahaz was the faith of Isaiah that saw in this coming child proof that God was with Judah; the sign to every unbelieving age will be the faith that sees in Christ a true Immanuel indeed. To discuss here questions about a virgin, or who the mother was, is to lose sight of the spiritual worth and significance of the sign; it is to think of the sign-board, and neglect the inscription.

But now we come to a passage in which not only the overthrow of Samaria, but also the desolation of Judah is set forth in terrible language. Perhaps the utter unresponsiveness of Ahaz led to the pronouncement of this doom on the house of Ahaz. At any rate the prophet pictures a scene of desolation that in his heart of hearts he would pray might not befall his people, if it could possibly be postponed. He is afraid, and describes what would happen, if by the foolish policy of Ahaz, and a singularly unwise diplomacy Jerusalem should be involved in the present struggle between Assyria and Egypt for world supremacy. Isaiah's advice was—"Keep aloof from the struggle, and look on calmly as an interested, but untouched spectator." This advice was refused, and, as we shall soon see, Jerusalem had to suffer the vengeance of Assyria for allying her interests with those of Egypt. It is ever the wise course for the people of God to concern themselves about the triumph of principle and to be indifferent as to what empire may exercise paramount power at any time. Neither Egypt nor Assyria could secure to Jerusalem the blessing of God. This could only come from a loyal allegiance to Jehovah.

This terrible threat against the house of Ahaz indeed breaks the connection, for it is followed by a renewal of

the great promise that Syria and Samaria shall soon be conquered. In view of that, why should Ahaz court the favour and seek the help of Assyria? Isaiah clearly declares the fall of these two kingdoms, which were threatening Jerusalem, and in token of his firm belief in what he was saying he first of all inscribes his prophecy in bold distinct characters on a tablet, while in due time he gives this same name to his next son, calling him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which, being interpreted, means, "Swift shall be the spoil: speedy shall be the prey." No delay of long continuance shall now be seen. Such wise words, however, avail not, for Ahaz is firmly resolved on calling in the aid of Assyria. The prophet assures the king that to do this was only to lean upon a prop, which would be vain and hurtful. Assyria would only bide her own time, and then invade Judah. Could this not be prevented? Could not the sense of the Divine protection be made so real as to lead even yet to the abandonment of the alliance with Assyria? Could not Jerusalem trust in her own sacred defence, and leave God to punish her enemies? God could spread His wings over Judah and prevent the Assyrian doing so, if only God were with His people in their glad obedience. Many schemes of alliance, doubtless, would be suggested by king and courtiers, who were not trusting in Jehovah. Some, perhaps, favoured a kind of triple alliance against Assyria, even of Syria, Samaria, Jerusalem. Ahaz himself, however, favoured an alliance with Assyria against Syria and Samaria. All such God-forgetting alliances Isaiah condemned in strongest possible language. He felt that God was by His mighty hand keeping him from temporising with the expediencies of men. O that Judah would make Jehovah their sanctuary

indeed by sanctifying Him as their Holy One! Failure to do this would bring down severest judgment upon them. Many alas! but not all would be crushed. Here the conviction as to a remnant is suggested again.

The doom of Syria is now set forth in a complete prophecy. How vain and foolish was this alliance of Samaria then with Syria! The glory of Jacob had been already dimmed, when Ephraim broke away from Judah, and internecine war prevailed between the two kingdoms. It was a bitter day when this took place, for it led to the more serious departure of Ephraim from Jehovah. How tenderly and pathetically Hosea weeps over this sad apostasy, this harlotry as he calls it! Amos, the stranger, had been silenced! Hosea, the home-born prophet, had been neglected. Samaria's final doom was drawing near. It was brought nearer still by this alliance with Syria, for by this means the kingdom of the Ten Tribes was exposed to the full vengeance of Assyria. This fell first on Damascus, but soon after on Ephraim. Thus the defence on which the advisers of Samaria had been so foolishly leaning was completely taken away. We notice in this prophecy against Syria the striking repetition of the refrain:—"This is the oracle of Jehovah Sabaoth." His fixed and determined purpose! To the prophet's eye the Divine favour was withdrawn because of the idolatrous customs over which Amos and Hosea had wept. These had brought no help, but only hurt everywhere. Yet with a strange fatuity, shadow of the coming doom, Ahaz is introducing these same idolatries into Jerusalem. Samaria as a last resource forms an alliance with Egypt, and when Shalmaneser heard of this, he resolved upon an immediate attack. Before, however, Samaria fell, the

Assyrian throne had a new occupant, for Shalmaneser dies in 722 and is succeeded by Sargon, who reigned from 722 to 705. So far as God was concerned, the worship of Astarte and Adonis with their Asherahs and sun-pillars brought about the supreme catastrophe now. So far as Assyria was concerned, its occasion was the alliance with So, who was either Shabaka the reigning Pharaoh, or some tributary governor, in command of Egyptian forces. After having captured Samaria, Sargon inflicted serious defeat two years after on So at Raphia (720).

The first period of Isaiah's ministry now comes to an end, and that in sad disappointment. The enthusiasm with which he had begun, had been met with coldness and growing indifference. The more faithful the prophet's preaching had been, the more hard and callous seemed to grow both king and government. They heard without understanding, and saw without coming under any deep impression. Was this hardening process of unbelief to go on much longer? Ah yes, until some dreadful calamity would befall Judah, such as had smitten Samaria. Even as the Pharaoh had hardened his heart in the days of Moses, so now was Ahaz hardening his heart. It is an important truth that while of course every result in human life can be traced in its ultimate source to God as the great first Cause, men by the rejecting of the means of grace are responsible for the hardening process. It is interesting to note that while the Hebrew text gives us the rendering which regards God as hardening men's hearts in judgment, the LXX. quoted by St Matthew xiii. 14 as used by Christ tells of the hardening process as one that goes on as men refuse wise and true prophetic teaching. What Christ saw going on in Capernaum, Isaiah now saw in Jerusalem. As

his counsel was refused by the ruling authorities. He has a vision of a speedy and complete desolation. He sees no hope at all for his country under the present government. The House of David has a most unworthy representative in Ahaz, and it must be cut right down, even to the ground, so that out of its root, in other and better conditions, there might arise a king more worthy of the royal house.

This is our prophet's first withdrawal from the court. He turns homeward to place his testimony in writing, and to wait in the quiet retirement of his home and disciples for a better day. He and his sons were a witness of God's great words, and his confidence is firm. But how sad was the condition of the court when this faithful voice was silenced! How utterly God-forsaken! What happened in the court of Saul when Samuel was dead and his words forgotten happens now to Ahaz. There is spiritual anarchy. Ahaz has recourse to wizards and soothsayers of all kinds, eager to find some necessary guidance in the trouble. What happened in these days we are not told, but we may well believe that it would not be long before some kind of mental malady fell on Ahaz, which rendered it necessary to consider seriously the question of placing the government in the hands of a regent.

It was a time of confusion and perplexity, perhaps of anarchy and revolt; a time of distress indeed, a time of weary looking for something better. The people are described as cursing their king and even God for the calamities from which they were sorely suffering. We know not much about Ahaz, but his last days could have had no honour. At the first opportunity his power and authority must have been taken from him, Hezekiah being appointed regent or joint king. When this is done a better state of things

begins to dawn. A new policy begins to find favour, and a new opportunity is given to the prophet, for an honourable return to a place of influence in the new king's councils. Around this coming king his hopes had increasingly gathered, and the more he knew of his private character, as it had been daily unfolding itself before his prophet-teacher, the more hopeful would he become. In such circumstances our prophet might have had a vision of better days, of a good government, and of a true king, more worthily representing the House of David, and its best traditions. But the terms in which the vision voices itself could never find realisation under any merely earthly king. We have here an ideal picture pointing forward even to a Messianic kingdom and a Divine King.

> August anticipations, symbols, types
> Of a dim splendour, ever on before.

The blessings of the new king are to be great. The whole land, even including the provinces so lately devastated by Assyrian invasions (734 B.C.) is once more to be reunited under a true scion of David's House, under whose rule the people might indeed be happy and rejoice. Peace is to diffuse its glories all around and war is to end, as all the weapons and uniform of the soldier are to be burnt up. Special interest gathers around the four names by which the new king is described. They tell forth his ideal and essential perfection as a true king indeed, giving in this way the highest royal attributes in a sublime combination. The four names are related to the four royal functions of a king as Counsellor, Governor, Protector and Civil Administrator. His counsel is to be wonderful; his power almighty, his fatherly pro-

tection of his people against all their enemies supreme, and generous as the true and abiding Father of his people, while the preservation of peace shall be his great concern. Such language speaks of an ideal king, and only in very poor degree could it find expression or fulfilment, even in a good king like Hezekiah or Josiah. Thus the germ of a perfect kingship is described, which finds its supreme embodiment in a true Messiah. Beyond all doubt, however, although Hezekiah fell short in many ways of Isaiah's high hopes, great must have been the joy of both people and prophet when this new king received full authority on the death of Ahaz. Isaiah's spirits rose high, as the clouds once again lifted, and the horizon became clear. The disappointments so soon to come, always inseparable from every effort to impress spiritual truths on governments and communities, would convince the prophet of the inability of any merely human king to secure perfect peace and good government, and deepen within him his yearning hope of One who was yet to come, who would be the true consummation of this scheme of being, the completion of this sphere of life. His confidence would be in what the holy jealousy and zeal of Jehovah would yet bring about. This confidence would be an answer to every doubt. In the actual history of Him who has come, we now know of whom the Spirit of God that was in Isaiah did really speak, as it testified so long ago of a true King, not only of David's House but of humanity, who would fulfil His boundless purpose, in conditions ever becoming more perfect.

CHAPTER V.

Messages to the Kingdoms affected by the Assyrian Invasions.

The prophets of Jehovah were as watchmen set upon their watch-towers to know first of all for themselves what the mind and will of Jehovah was, and then to make it known to their people and rulers. They regarded Jehovah as God of the whole world, and not of any small tribe with limited jurisdiction. Hence they have to declare His purpose of supremacy as one concerning all kingdoms, because the interests of righteousness were affected by it. At this place we take up a series of oracles dealing with the kingdoms of Palestine, and its neighbouring territory, all being now overshadowed by the movement of Assyria towards its desired goal as the paramount World-Power.

On the west of Judah lay the great towns of the Philistines, which had for so long been playing an important part in the affairs of Palestine. Concerning these towns our prophet now speaks in glowing words. Their territory lay right on the great highway, along which had to travel the great armies of war, and the caravans of peaceful trade. It was on their plains that Assyrian and Egyptian had to contend for supremacy, while Jerusalem might hold aloof in her mountain stronghold from all these conflicts. This had been Isaiah's advice. These great Philistine cities were leagued together, and had been hereditary enemies of David's house. They had been driven out from the central and northern parts of the country, and had made themselves very strong in such towns as Ekron, Ashdod, Gaza,

etc. Assyria had to reduce these great cities. Their policy was to unite the whole west and south of Palestine against the northern power. In this policy we shall find Hezekiah sympathising, but against this Ahaz had taken foolish but decisive steps. He had leagued with Assyria to strengthen himself against his foes on every side, and to prevent Philistine raids. The death of Ahaz meant a new policy for Judah, and the Philistines were doubtless rejoicing in all their towns at the turn events had taken. The great Assyrian rod surely will now no more smite them. They, therefore, rose in revolt, and sought the help of Hezekiah. Padi, who was in authority in Ekron and loyal to Assyria, was dethroned and handed over to be kept as a prisoner in Jerusalem. Now Isaiah could no more favour an alliance between Hezekiah and the Philistines, than between Ahaz and Assyria. Hence we have this oracle, in which all premature rejoicing on the part of the Philistines is forbidden. Sennacherib would be as hurtful to them as either Sargon or Shalmaneser. The Philistines, as foes of God's people, had no right to hope for any deliverance. Only destruction before Assyria awaits them. The prophet pictures the terrible invader marching down upon the land. He sees the smoke of burning villages as he advances, and he hears the tramp of troops thoroughly disciplined in the art of war. But for Judah God would prove Himself a refuge, if Hezekiah and his government would keep out of this new entanglement, and trust in Jehovah. From whatever quarter envoys might come to Jerusalem asking her to join in alliance, the prophet would have them all met by one clear and distinct reply, that Jerusalem had been founded by Jehovah, and that He could, if trusted, make it a sure and safe dwelling-place.

Hezekiah's government soon found out their mistake in departing from Isaiah's counsel. The Philistines were reduced by Sennacherib, and Jerusalem bound to come to terms and surrender Padi, who was again put in his seat of power in Ekron by the Assyrian conqueror.

The oracle against Tyre comes in about this time too, at least in its earliest part, for the threatened invasion of the land by Assyria must mean grave danger to this great emporium of world-wide commerce. The interest of this oracle lies in its being addressed to this metropolis of the world's trade,—this great Phœnician empire founded on commercial, and not military, supremacy. Very gradually, but steadily and surely, this empire had been built up. Tyre and Zidon had tapped all the known mines and trade centres along the Mediterranean Sea, and had become the great place of exchange for the merchandise of the east and west. What Alexandria was in the first century of the Christian era, and what Great Britain is now, Tyre was then. Her situation on the sea, with her mountain barrier behind, marked her out for a seafaring destiny, and gave her an almost impregnable position. But our prophet in his opening words sees the coming overthrow of this great and proud people. The great mercantile marine of Tyre is to be a thing of the past. Wonder and lamentation will strike all who hear such news. For how old, and how successful a town was Tyre? Who could possibly contemplate the destruction of such an imperial stronghold? As the prophet sees the onsweep of Assyria, he knows Tyre must suffer sooner or later, and he sees in this the purpose of Jehovah who must humble all the pride of men, that is based on wrong, or perishable foundations, and be alone exalted as supreme. It has been thought that the terrible

vengeance executed upon Merodach Baladan in Babylon about 709 B.C. is quoted as a warning of what might happen to Tyre; but the passage in which Chaldæa here occurs is probably corrupt, and others see in this word either Canaan on Chittim. Some words have here been added to the text, which cannot now be understood. But certainly the original piece ending with the words, with which it began, Howl! ye merchant ships of Tarshish! is a most striking composition telling the glory and the fall of Tyre, and showing the valuelessness of mere trade supremacy. A lasting supremacy rests only on righteousness.

The words that follow are almost certainly a later addition made to the original piece. The comparison of Tyre to a harlot is in harmony with the prophetic conception that all departure from the living God is whoredom. The prophetic ideal involves a loving relationship between God and man, such as in measure may be symbolised by marriage, hence any deviation from supreme devotion to God is compared to marital infidelity. Judah was guilty of this sin in her idolatries. To the prophet's pure eyes Tyre is guilty of this sin too, inasmuch as she has forsaken God and made commercial success her god. Hence the large place occupied by Tyre in the world's map is soon to be empty.

A period during which it is to be completely forgotten is mentioned—a period like that during which a sore captivity befell Judah, or a whole dynasty of kings. After a long siege (585-572 B.C.) Nebuchadrezzar, the powerful king of Babylon, captured the city, while after a brief season of renewed activity she fell again, this time to rise no more, under the attack of Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. A Messianic hope such as we find in the later prophetic writer's words

is expressed that the commerce of Tyre might so be conducted as that its gains might be dedicated not to Melkarth but to Jehovah. If men would only remember His claims on them, would they not gladly give the first-fruits of their substance to Him, who giveth all?

Passing in eager survey next across the border the prophet's eye rests on the land of Moab, and over it we have a burst of lamentation, as its coming destruction is powerfully portrayed. How suddenly as in a night and unexpectedly is Moab's doom to come! In most graphic language and with singular power of geographical detail, the prophet describes a whole people in mourning.

Already in the reign of Jehoram, king of Samaria, and in alliance with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, a terrible punishment had been inflicted upon Moab (2 Kings iii. 4-25). During Ahab's reign (850 B.C.) Moab had been compelled to pay a very heavy annual tribute of lambs and rams. Failure to pay led to this dire retribution. Perhaps some older oracle of lamentation has been here incorporated in Isaiah's prophecies, and made use of by him to depict an even greater calamity that is to come upon Moab in the course of providence at the hand of Assyria. In such circumstances the people of Moab terror-stricken are described as proposing to renew their tribute to Judah, and seek shelter and protection from Jerusalem. They send ambassadors to Hezekiah, with most flattering and complimentary language. They earnestly press their claim. But Isaiah again would have Hezekiah keep out of all external complications. Assyria would only be the surer to come if she imagined that Jerusalem was trying to form all adjoining peoples into a confederacy. No, urges Isaiah. He would have all overtures from Moab refused promptly. He

reminds the king of their former history, and of all their unfriendly relations with Judah. Upon them, as upon Philistia and Tyre, destruction must come. Hence the lamentation is again resumed, and in three sad verses the overthrow of Moab under the figure of the vine of Sibmah, is pictured most pathetically. Fruitless are all her prayers! In her temple she is weary with vain and futile entreaty to gods that cannot hear! The final prophetic word concerning Moab is one that tells of almost immediate ruin.

If all this is to happen to Moab, what about Edom? Once Edom had formed part of David's dominions, but like Moab she too had rebelled. They are adjoining countries, sister lands, and equally rebels against Judah. No wonder the prophetic ear hears the cry of Edom addressing him as a watchman. It is an anxious cry, full of appeal. The night of darkness is passing over Moab—ah! how much of it has passed? Will the morning soon be here? But the oracle now very strangely is one of silence. Idumæa is Dumah, or the land of silence, and concerning her fate the oracle is silence too. Not now, but later on, the prophet will break his silence and speak about Edom's fate. With what terrible earnestness we shall yet find him speaking. For a later oracle describes the work of Divine judgment upon Edom, and her great capital of Bozrah (p. 97).

With devastation on every side, the travelling caravans of the Arabian tribes would soon be brought into touch with much suffering around them. These tribes of nomadic race were the world's carriers before modern methods of railway conveyance were adopted. We know how Joseph went down to Egypt in such a caravan, and all the rich traffic of Nineveh and Damascus passed this way to Egypt. Therefore as country after country came under

the conquering foot of Assyria, these merchant men would be the first to hear the news, and be on every hand requisitioned for food and refreshment for the fugitives from all quarters. But Kedar herself shall soon fall too. All her mighty men and enterprising traders shall cease. This was what Jehovah Sabaoth was purposing. He was appearing in dread majesty, and truly He was shaking terribly the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of King Hezekiah. The Approaching Danger.

In English history there is a striking parallel to the events of this period in Jewish history. Edward VI., under the guardianship of Cranmer, had established a pure form of religious worship in England. On his death, Queen Mary upset everything, and, for their allegiance to the Protestant Faith, drove into retirement those who had escaped the fires of Smithfield. With Elizabeth a new era dawned, and the religious life of the country displayed itself in great enthusiasm, resulting in the overthrow of the Armada. The reign of Ahaz was like unto that of Mary; with the accession of Hezekiah begins a reign like unto that of Elizabeth, having in its course the marvellous disappearance of Sennacherib's hosts by the command of Jehovah. God's banished people took new heart of courage, and the hidden prophet once more appears as the guiding spirit of fresh developments.

A great reform characterised the early days of the new reign. A complete iconoclasm or idol-breaking is carried

through. The brazen serpent made by Moses, and associated with a great scene of healing, had been raised to an undue place of reverence. This is declared to be Nehushtan, or a mere piece of brass. Then the temple, in which the heathenish altar of Ahaz had been erected, was thoroughly purified and repaired. The usual services of Jehovah, which had suffered neglect, were renewed; the feasts were restored, and the sacrifices duly offered. The honour and glory of God were called into remembrance.

The more friendly reception now extended to Isaiah at the court of the new king would give him the opportunity he desired to dwell upon what he conceived to be the Divine method adopted in the government of the world. He saw clearly that Assyria was to be an all-conquering power, but only as a rod or instrument in the Divine hand. His desire was to impress upon Hezekiah, that if he would only keep separate from all external alliances, and place his trust in Jehovah, he would see the torrent of invasion sweeping past, and leaving him and his kingdom untouched. Isaiah would, doubtless, impress the king by his convinced and glowing words, but he was handicapped by his ministers, who, of course, believed in the healing virtue of diplomacy. Hence the prophet would not get all he wanted in the way of co-operation from the king, and the reforms both in religion and policy would be far from what the prophet desired. Samaria had fallen, and surely this was warning loud enough for Judah to hear! This catastrophe, under the conquering arms of Sargon, was full in the knowledge of Hezekiah, at least as regent in the affairs of Judah. He was now the responsible person during the apparent, and, perhaps, dishonoured collapse of Ahaz, for we are told how Ahaz did not receive honoured burial, but died probably

unwept and unsung by a nation for which he had sowed such bitter seed.

In what powerful and graphic language does the oracle concerning Assyria deal with the situation at this time! The might and ambition of Sargon is fully set before us, and the contrast between the Divine purpose and the thought in Sargon's mind, is clearly stated. Assyria, trusting in the mighty god of its own people, went forth to spread the glory of Asshur, without any regard for the rights of nations, or for that righteousness which alone is supreme, and by which every nation is finally judged. Self-aggrandisement, imperial splendour, territorial increase —these are at all times the desire of the selfish principle in man and nations, and these bring sure and irretrievable doom, both on that man and nation in which they become supreme objects. To make his nominees kings or princes, even as in modern days Napoleon did, this was the reason why Assyrian armies moved onwards to their goal. There was no pure or sublime thought of advancing true civilisation, or of spreading truth and goodness, or of making mankind brighter, happier, better. The nation that resisted was crushed, and its people carried away into captivity. It was in harmony with this Assyrian policy that the Ten Tribes following their kinsmen in Naphtali were carried into the regions beyond, and their land finally colonised by those strangers, who became Samaritans, with whom the Jews had no dealing. To Nineveh's self-confidence there seemed at present no limit.

But the divinely-taught prophet saw things differently. The power of Assyria was only a rod in Jehovah's hand—a rod that could not move itself, and that must cease moving, when God so decreed. The prophet, therefore, exclaims, "O Assyrian! thou art only the rod of the Divine anger;

thou art sent by God only to fulfil a Divine charge. If Jerusalem does suffer, it will only be by way of needful chastisement; the glory will all belong to God; and when the work has been accomplished, punishment will fall on the pride of Nineveh." Judah, God's chosen people, against which Assyria now boasts so loudly, and which, in a season of infatuation, had leant on Assyria—Judah shall yet by God's decree inflict a deadly wound on that boastful power, —such a wound as had been inflicted on Egypt in the day of the Exodus, or in the day of Oreb on Midian. With this supreme confidence in Jehovah, and with this way of construing history, Isaiah could boldly come into the royal presence, and say, "O my people, be not afraid of the Assyrian!" With true prophetic insight Isaiah was also endued with power and courage, and could view even the greatest kings of the earth, and their movements and combinations, as things to be laughed at, and held in derision (Psalm ii.). Only for a little while shall the wicked vaunt himself against the righteous. These "little whiles" are seasons of testing to faith in every age. The "little while" of Assyria's boastful and apparently unchecked progress, was such a time to Jerusalem. The purpose of Assyria is to cut off nations, as if they were all at her mercy. Her record lies before us, as in campaign after campaign, Calno, Arpad, Hamath, Damascus, Samaria, Philistia had all fallen before the might of Asshur. It was just as if nations were bird nests for this great plunderer to break up and destroy. What then was to stand in his way, or prevent him meting out a similar fate to Jerusalem? The prophet was of those,

> Who ever divine
> A mystery of Purpose, gleaming through
> The secular confusions of the world.

In judgment Isaiah had seen the Divine hand stretched out already, and that hand wielded the government of the universe. Hence his word to Hezekiah and his people is that they should humble themselves, repent of their sins, and enthrone Jehovah as their sure defence. To grasp and teach the sovereignty of the Divine Purpose in all its supremacy, was Isaiah's privilege and responsibility now. When this purpose shall have been fulfilled, the remnant of the Ten Tribes, and the remnant of Judah shall once again be reunited in a true people, and celebrate the Passover with gladness. Then never more would Judah as under Ahaz's infatuated leadership trust in the rod that smote them; they would trust in Him, who held that rod in His hand. The best traditions of Jerusalem preserved the story of the Red Sea deliverance, and of the victory over Midian at Oreb. Their fathers told what things God had done in those days.

But Isaiah felt keenly that the only stay to Assyria's threatened assault upon Jerusalem would be a national repentance. In most striking language the prophet shows how the conqueror might advance from the north, and come even to the gates of the Holy City. This was what Sargon might do at any moment, if only his hands were free from work elsewhere. We see the line of the march of the proud conqueror from place to place, from Aiath through the Pass right up to some prominent hill top, from which he could see the city, and shake his fist against it. Oh! what consternation would then, and with reason, be felt!

The news of the fall of Babylon had just come to Jerusalem, and thus Sargon might be at liberty to complete his plans, and reduce the whole of Palestine. Merodach

Baladan, a Chaldæan prince, had been able to throw off the power of Assyria, and establish himself as an independent sovereign in Babylon. This independence he maintained for some twelve years (722-710 B.C.), but Sargon at last completely reduced him, and compelling him to fly inflicted great destruction on this city, which was afterwards to play so prominent a part in history. Whether or not any communication had passed between Merodach and Hezekiah at the time of this movement we are not told. Doubtless there had been some expression of sympathy sent between the two courts during this period of Merodach's first revolt. But now we come to the definite historical statements about the severe sickness of Hezekiah, and the visit of an embassy from Babylon to congratulate him on his recovery. The close connection in which all this stands with Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (702-701 B.C.) suggests that the king's sickness and the embassy would be about this time, when Merodach again, but only for a brief season, rallied his forces, and proclaimed anew his independence in Babylon. It was "in those days." Hezekiah's reign, as sole king, commencing in 715 B.C., and running twenty-nine years would end in 686 B.C. 701 B.C. would, then, be his fourteenth year, and after this time he had fifteen years added to his life, as we are told. In this fourteenth year Sennacherib invaded Judah, and compelled Jerusalem to make terms, according both to the Assyrian Inscriptions and the record in the book of Kings (2 Kings xviii. 13). It was once thought very probable that the fourteenth year might be that of a possible invasion by Sargon, but the record here distinctly speaks of Sennacherib. Now while Hezekiah had been regent and king in 710 B.C. for fully fourteen years, there is no evidence of an invasion of Judah

by Sargon at that date, and, as we have seen, the prophet deals with it as only a possible one, and by way of warning.

The sickness of Hezekiah at one time threatened to take a very serious turn, and to betoken the early termination of his life. In fact, the prophet is represented as very earnestly warning his royal master to prepare for death. This warning was taken to heart, at least in some measure. The king prayed for recovery. He recalls his pious life and protests his loyalty to God, with the result, that Isaiah comes with the gracious promise of recovery, and of a prolongation of his reign for fifteen years.

> Then he plucked his flickering life again
> From half-way down the shadow of the grave.

As a sign of this the saddened king sees the shadow on the steps of Ahaz going back ten steps, and on recovery expresses his feeling of gratitude to God in words now enshrined in a beautiful psalm. This is called a "Miktam," a poem of deep and precious meaning, or simply a Miktabh, *i.e.* a Writing. For the word "Miktam," is not of certain meaning. This psalm here ascribed to Hezekiah was, doubtless, used in the praise of the Second Temple as a suitable expression for the feelings of those who have been brought back even from the gates of death; hence we have the liturgical note at its close. The sore sufferings of a great sickness, the deep meditations of one in full view of death, the conviction that in this life only men can serve and praise God, and a worthy sense of the Divine goodness—all this is before us in this psalm, as the expression of a heart deeply exercised, and truly awed by the mystery and pain of suffering (see Ps. cxv. 17).

The occasion of Hezekiah's restoration to health is taken

advantage of by Merodach to send a message of congratulation, and at the same time to invite his help and sympathy in his new bid for power. With a gushing but unwise enthusiasm Hezekiah receives these ambassadors, and shows them all the sights of his capital. In the eyes of the prophet this was a most foolish and impolitic thing. It was an open violation of the policy which he had been urging upon Judah all his days, and therefore to him a matter of deep grief. Isaiah did not want his country involved in any way in the affairs of the world. The reception of envoys from Merodach would, of course, be a most serious offence in the eyes of the Assyrian. It was also so in the eyes of Isaiah, who uttered words of indignation, in which he went the length of saying, that Babylon which now seemed so friendly would yet become the most deadly enemy of Jerusalem and David's royal house. How unlikely seemed such an issue then? But all this turned out so. Babylon in future days became a rod of the Divine anger. Hezekiah must have been moved by such burning words, delivered, we may well believe, with passionate force. His troubled heart, however, found rest in the fond hope that such a doom was far away. Thus men condone their sins; they do not know how much nearer the doom is than they think.

Hezekiah and his government now exert themselves to make the defences of the city stronger. They give attention to the water supply in case of a siege, they repair the walls, and replenish their armoury. All good enough, if only they had looked more to God, and found their real strength in the moral and spiritual conditions of righteousness. The prophet in his oracle concerning Jerusalem, the Valley of Vision, and the home of prophecy

tells us how his people were rejoicing in outward defences, and imagining that a postponed invasion was one that never was going to come. This rejoicing was premature indeed. The Assyrian conqueror was near; and away in the distant future loomed the Elamite conqueror. One such foe at a time was enough indeed, and perhaps we have a later stanza here added by our editor from another prophet.

What was necessary now in Jerusalem was a national repentance. In its place was foolish confidence and insensate rejoicing. Hence the oracle closes with the terribly sad warning that Jerusalem's sin could only be purged by some dreadful calamity, even if it could be purged by that! No sin is more inexpiable than that which ignores Divine warnings, and goes on in ways of callous indifference. "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!"

CHAPTER VII.

Isaiah's Work in Jerusalem in View of the Crisis (705-701 B.C.).

It was an immense undertaking for Isaiah to deal with the callous indifference and open unbelief of the ruling authorities in Jerusalem. There seemed to him to be a very strange misreading of the events daily happening all around—a remarkable unwillingness to understand the signs of the times, which were so clear and urgent to the prophet. Samaria had already fallen, and fallen through the same causes that Isaiah now sees at work in his own city. Amos and Hosea had both denounced the sins of

luxurious living and drunken debauchery, which had been seen by them in Samaria ; but in spite of all their words of warning, these evils had gone on sapping the very life of the Ten Tribes, until the virgin daughter of Israel had fallen, to rise no more. The drunkards of Ephraim hated him that rebuked their sin in the gate, and abhorred him that spoke uprightly. They oppressed the poor, built splendid houses, and planted pleasant vineyards. There was "no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land." Hence the mighty and strong instrument of Divine vengeance swept them away. The state of Jerusalem is now very similar to that of Samaria. Will not the people be warned in time? The prevalence of the drink sin was an alarming feature. Nothing could so much steal away their senses, and make them careless to the dangers that were only too real and so near. But when Isaiah speaks he is only mocked at as one repeating mere truisms and commonplaces, only fit for children. He was a mere croaker, not for a moment to be listened to. But these scorners only supply the dark background which sets our prophet in brilliant relief. For he is insistent, and points out that to neglect even such simple words as his, will only bring upon them a worse condemnation. Their confidence was false, their trust a refuge of lies, which the overflowing tempest, which had already swept away Samaria, would soon sweep away. Their trust that Jerusalem was inviolable was truly a foolish delusion. Its inviolability was only possible in far other conditions than were now to be found. Only those who were built on Jehovah would be inviolable ; only those could remain calm and self-possessed amid all tumults. Every other foundation would be wholly and completely swept away. Judgment may be God's strange work, but

it is a work that He must carry through at all costs, beginning even in His own house.

It may have seemed unusual, almost incredible, that God could use a heathen power to chastise Jerusalem. Was it not a new method? Ah, "new occasions teach new duties," and each occasion requires its own method. God is wise, and He always uses instruments and methods that are effective and appropriate. Surely any man with his eyes open can see how many, and how varied are both the instruments and methods used in the common operations of agriculture. Every season of the year has its own work and its own instruments; every kind of crop its own particular treatment. The farmer is taught by experience, and becomes wiser as the years pass by. God is ever wonderful in counsel, and great in wisdom; He needeth not that any should teach Him. If then, in the changing drama of human circumstance, God may bring the Assyrian to reduce Jerusalem, let men find in this only proof and evidence of infinite wisdom and supreme necessity.

Jerusalem was dear to the heart of Isaiah, was it not also dear to the heart of God? Was it not an Ariel, a hero, or altar of God? If it is to be dealt with as an altar on which many sacrifices shall be laid, that then must only be for its supreme good? It was the city of David, and in the prophetic thought such a city should be according to God's own heart, a pure altar, and a brave defender of the faith. What a bright vision of deliverance, therefore, floats before the mind of the prophet! It may yet be rescued; this sad dream of coming destruction may only be a bad dream after all, the baseless imagination of a dreamer. Once David had encamped against this city in its old Jebus days and taken it, but surely there need be no necessity for the

capture of David's city by another foe. How dreadful and painful to the prophet's soul to have to contemplate even the possibility of such a sad event! How his faith in God would bid him rise above many of the discouraging symptoms around him, and believe that God might by other means bring the people back to Himself!

But how great is the task to secure this end by spiritual influences. Eyes are closed, ears are stopped, hearts are heavy. There seems no desire, or capacity to receive and to understand the prophetic testimony uttered by Isaiah. There is no spiritual sensibility on the part of the people, and use and wont, even in religious matters, has made them regardless of all true faith or discerning appreciation of God. What appearance of wisdom, even, that they may seem to have, shall come to nothing. For there is this strange perversity that people imagine that they have no bounden duty to render service to God; they forget that they are but creatures, only clay in the hand of the great Potter!

The condition of things that should prevail in a true city of God is now brought before us. Eyes shall be open, ears unstopped, hearts all responsive to God, and then all nature in its every part shall rejoice and be glad.

> Not alone
> For their possessor dawn those qualities,
> For the new glory mixes with the heaven
> And earth.

The distinction of class and caste shall cease, while every form of cruel oppression shall be a thing of the past. In this city God indeed would be the glory in the midst, and a wall of fire around, "a refuge, and a very present help in trouble."

Deep but kind are the wounds of a friend! Isaiah probes to the very heart the evil doing of Jerusalem. He has a most tender appeal to make in God's great name even that of a father to his children. Even among dumb animals there is found some love for the hand that provides food and shelter! But this, alas! is not shown to Jehovah, who had been Israel's God from the time of the Exodus. Both the moral and spiritual state of the people is set forth in most pathetic language. Nations have often put religious ritual and ceremonial in the place of true piety and spiritual devotion, forgetting that God

> Seeks not that His altars
> Blaze, careless how, so that they do but blaze.

This Jerusalem was doing. There was no neglect of national worship, feasts and fasts were all duly observed, but all this was a body without a soul. No answer came to their prayers because they regarded iniquity in their hearts. God could not hear the petitions of those who lived immoral lives. Isaiah had to emphasise this great truth, which men are ever apt to forget. God can only have communion with those whose scarlet and crimson dyed sins are put away. This in his own experience the prophet had learned; this he now fully proclaims. The presence of the Temple, or the observance of some sacred rite are no guarantee by themselves of holiness; and while our prophet doubtless rejoiced in all outward means of grace, he rejoiced much more in the spiritual realities to which they point, and which they are meant to secure. Sin must be put away, if men are to enter into, or abide in the fellowship of the thrice Holy, or secure any favour at His hand. In Jerusalem there must be a mighty work of purga-

tion accomplished; when this is done, the best days of David's house will be back again. In one particular case the special idolatry of Jerusalem is mentioned—that worship under every green tree and in gardens as among the Phœnicians. The falsehood and unsatisfactoriness of all this is shown here powerfully. Such worshippers shall be as withering trees, as gardens without water!

Already had Isaiah addressed some warning words to the women of Jerusalem. He now again does the same, for when trouble comes upon any country, the women are among the first to feel its sore and sad effects, as they are deprived of many a home comfort, and wounded in their tenderest feelings as wife, or mother, or sister. Mark how sympathetically the prophet enters into all the details of his people, and is overwhelmed himself with sorrow and grief at the possibilities that lie before an ease-loving and careless generation. Oh! that the women would rouse themselves timeously in their best interests—even the protection of home and country, "*pro focis, et pro aris.*" Safe and peaceful dwelling-places, far from the alarms of war are woman's greatest need. These can only be enjoyed when the Spirit of God secures that the people shall be all righteous.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Egyptian Alliance, and the Deliverance of Jerusalem (702-686 B.C.).

We are now brought face to face with the very serious crisis in Jerusalem which Isaiah had dreaded, and which he had done yeoman service in trying to prevent. Hezekiah

and his ministers were bent on carrying out the fatuous policy continually and consistently denounced by the prophet, of trusting to a foreign alliance, and of necessity thus embroiling themselves in the conflict for world-supremacy which was being strenuously maintained by Assyria against all claimants, whether in Babylon, or in Egypt. Sargon was now dead, but there reigned in his place Sennacherib, a name dread in the annals of Judah. This mighty ruler again made Nineveh his capital, and started forth on his great campaigns, with indomitable vigour, season after season. Having reduced Babylon, and compelled Merodach again to flee, he found himself confronted by a rising of all the western and southern parts of Palestine, a rising which had been instigated, or at least cordially supported by Egypt. It was clearly in the interests of Egypt—Egypt as we have usually understood the term, and not some imaginary kingdom of similar name in Northern Arabia—to encourage the formation of a strong confederacy of states as a buffer to the progress of Assyria. But it was not in the interests of Jerusalem to mix herself up with these negotiations. Thus Isaiah taught, and this the course of events was now to prove.

In Hezekiah's government there was a strong pro-Egyptian tendency, and at this time it was supported by Shebna, the minister in chief office. Of all policies this was most obnoxious, especially to the prophets of Judah. Egypt may have helped the Ten Tribes, but she had never been a friend of Jerusalem. Nothing but woe could be announced by a prophet like Isaiah upon any proposal, in any shape or form, to depend on the help of Egypt. Already, as we have seen, such an alliance with Egypt had

been the occasion of the vengeance of Assyria breaking in all its force upon Samaria.

Shebna's policy distinctly committed Jerusalem to a definite support of the Western powers at this time. He had acted in concert with those in Ekron, who had revolted from Assyria, and had become the jailer of the deposed Padi, the ruler of that town appointed by Sargon. In these circumstances, it became a matter of high strategy for Sennacherib to reduce Jerusalem to submission, and not allow such a hostile power to remain behind, which might at any time cut his line of communication.

Isaiah denounces Shebna in strongest language for the dangerous position into which he had brought his country, and doubtless his words had a striking effect upon the king, for when later Hezekiah's ministers wait upon the ambassadors of Sennacherib, Shebna occupies not the first, but the second place. This minister seems to have been of foreign extraction, and a man who, out of sympathy altogether with the traditions of Jerusalem, had pushed himself to the front by sheer force of ability. In the reign of Ahaz doubtless he had found his opportunity. But now he imagined himself secure in his tenure of office, and was making arrangements for a family place of burial. He is warned by the prophet that he was entertaining groundless expectations; for the days of his power were already numbered, and his disgrace was at hand, when he should be driven to a foreign land, and there find his grave. Isaiah names his successor, and puts his hope in Eliakim, who had probably sympathised with the prophet's teaching. He is called here "My servant," but we cannot press this word, when we remember that this term is given to all those who carry out any part of the Divine programme even

though they may not have identified themselves heartily with God's cause. And the hopes built upon Eliakim do not seem to have been realised. He apparently united with Shebna in the government, so that the peg, which was to have been securely fastened, had to be pulled out. Later on the prophet tells us of his disappointment.

In a most striking manner Isaiah had acted out his firm conviction of the coming overthrow of Egypt at the hands of Assyria. For when the commander-in-chief of the army of Sargon took the strong Philistine town of Ashdod, he adopted a singular and impressive procedure to press home on the conscience of his people, the folly of allying with Egypt. He stripped himself of mantle and sandals, and went about proclaiming that just in similar manner would all the glory of Egypt be stripped off by Assyria. Nothing, he was sure, could withstand the might of Assyria, so far as Egypt was concerned. The fall of the Philistine towns was clearest presage of the fall of the Pharaohs. But Jerusalem seems to have made up her mind, and so went on with negotiations for this Egyptian alliance, whether it was agreeable or the reverse to the representative of Jehovah He in fact was not being consulted at all in this matter. Hence in the oracle that now deals with this proposed alliance it is the prophet's great complaint that there is far too much secrecy, and that the government do not seem desirous to secure the Divine approbation. The arrangements go on. Ambassadors are already at the important city of Zoan, having passed through Tahpanhes en route, and the paramount Pharaoh ratifies the terms of the treaty. The Pharaoh was now Shabataka, the second king of the twenty-fifth dynasty.

This was a Nubian or Ethiopian dynasty, and owed its

origin to Piankhi, who had sallied forth from his far Southern capital, and established his power over Egypt about 750. Memphis had fallen before him. In the person of his grandson, Shabaka, this dynasty began. There have been discovered in the remains of Nineveh two seals of this Pharaoh, and so witness is borne to the negotiations that must have gone on between Assyria and Egypt. Perhaps these were among the presents sent to Sargon. Shabaka was followed by Shabataka, who held power, until losing prestige by his defeat at Altâku, he was deposed by his ambitious viceroy Tirhâkah about 693 B.C. The rise and progress of this Nubian dynasty is one of the remarkable events of our period. There was a necessity for a new and vigorous dynasty, for the power of Egypt had been greatly crippled by internecine strife between a number of petty kingdoms up and down the Delta, more or less independent, so often at war with one another. Through the prowess of Nubia's dynasty Egypt was able to present a united front to Assyria. But all was vain, for on the field of Altâku (701 B.C.) as at Raphia (720 B.C.) the armies of Egypt are defeated by the vigorous and disciplined legions of the north. This is foretold in Isaiah's graphic words. He sees the negotiations going on, the eager exchange of gifts—ah! he says, it is of no use! Egypt is a land that cannot give any real or effective help. She is a boaster, but of no use!

Once before Isaiah had had to retire from the court of Ahaz in terrible disappointment. Is not this his sad experience once again? Does he fare no better at the hands of Hezekiah and Eliakim, than at the hands of Ahaz and Shebna? Once again the prophetic testimony, uttered so bravely, is to be written down that it may abide as a

witness for the days to come. What a magnificent oracle we now have, so full of spiritual warning, and distinct in its appreciation of how alone true rest and protection could be found. He pierces the thick overhanging clouds of gloom as did Jeremiah later in his prison cell, and utters words of glorious hope.

He has anticipations of a glory
About to be revealed.

His hope springs immortal from his confidence in the Divine grace of Jehovah. But now at the door standeth the judge—Jehovah in rage and flame sifting the nations. After this terrible season there will come a glad time of deliverance. Like oases in the desert, are Isaiah's promises amid terrible judgments. At home, in his sad seclusion, while Assyria is devastating the provinces, and wringing hard terms of tribute from Hezekiah and Jerusalem, our prophet sustained by his bright faith, burning all the brighter in this hour of darkness, sees the funeral pyre being prepared for the Assyrian conqueror. No human hand can stay his progress, no diplomatic combination of peoples can hinder his victorious career—but ah! what is this? Away on the horizon, the God-filled man sees a vision of a great conflagration! It is the overthrow of Sennacherib he sees, and the ultimate sacking of his proud capital. But this will be the doing of Jehovah in His own time. How beautiful is the figure in which the prophet pictures the Divine protection of Jerusalem! She is as a nest of young ones dear to the mother-heart of God. What mother birds do for their little ones in times of danger, that Jehovah will do. The other figure is stranger indeed, but vivid in its delineation of Jehovah's might! Lions will only laugh at the cries and shouts of

panic-stricken shepherds; not thus will they be driven away from their prey. Jehovah is a lion-like defender of His people, whom the shouting boasts of Assyria will not be able to drive away. But how important the thought! Jehovah abides His time, calm and unmoved! Some indication is given here of negotiations between Assyria and Egypt. The land of buzzing insects or Ethiopia sends its ambassadors to the great and warlike race of the north—the land intersected by mighty rivers. The pride of Asshur however hastens on to what he thinks his great harvest-time, but that harvest shall never be his in the sense he expects. And now we come to the third and probably most successful campaign of Sennacherib, when after having conquered Babylon, awed Tyre and reduced Moab, having, as he tells us in his own proud Inscriptions, confidence in Asshur his god, he captures the fortified towns of Judah, and is preparing for the siege of Jerusalem. To this time Isaiah's words doubtless refer in ch. i. 7-9 (p. 81) as he describes the desolation of the provinces, and shows us Jerusalem in her solitude as a booth in a vineyard, all on the watch for the destroying armies. But Hezekiah is obliged to come to terms. With this both the Inscriptions and the words of the book of Kings agree. Victory crowned the Assyrian arms at Altâku, where the armies of Shabataka were routed, and a very heavy tribute was imposed on Jerusalem. Hezekiah had to make humble acknowledgment of his wrong-doing in supporting the Philistine towns in their revolt against their suzerain. The refusal to adopt Isaiah's advice now cost the people dearly, and Hezekiah was much impoverished. This was indeed the hour and the power of darkness, a moment of anxiety and suffering for Jerusalem. Hezekiah became, for the time being, the vassal of Assyria,

and Sennacherib returned in triumph to Nineveh. And yet, we may be sure, the very first opportunity for ending this vassalage by refusing to pay tribute would be availed of by Judah.

By many it is believed that the proud and insulting demand for the surrender of Jerusalem came immediately after the conclusion of this treaty. Sennacherib had gone forward in his campaign, and although, after full deliberation, he had arranged terms with Hezekiah and fixed the amount of tribute, he suddenly came to the conclusion that he could not with safety leave Jerusalem as yet at liberty to strike him from behind. The improbability of this seems to lie on the very surface, and so far as the information at present available for our purpose is concerned, there is no necessity for holding that the Rab-sâk's haughty message came at once, and during this campaign, Altâku may not have been a very decisive victory, but that and the treaty with Hezekiah may have satisfied Sennacherib for the time. Thus both the record in Kings and the Inscriptions can allow us to maintain that there was a later campaign of Sennacherib, rendered necessary by Hezekiah's refusal to continue the tribute. During this second campaign the demand for the surrender of the city finds its place. Meanwhile Sennacherib had found his hands full in the north, for Babylon was giving proof of its coming greatness, while the great Tirhâkah, dissatisfied with Shabataka, had about 693 B.C. seized the throne of the Pharaohs, and on every hand the power of Assyria was again defied. A new confederacy of Jerusalem, Philistia, and Egypt was formed. In these circumstances Sennacherib prepared for an invasion, which was to bring him no honour, but the rather to overwhelm

him with disaster. His army advances towards the frontier of Egypt, while a strong division is told off to reduce Jerusalem.

We have a very full account of the proud and boastful words of the Rab-sâk uttered in the hearing of the men upon the wall, for so sure was he of the speedy fall of the city. Already Jerusalem had submitted, why not again, and at once? This renewed and more determined effort to capture Jerusalem filled king and courtiers with alarm. Hezekiah humbles himself now at last not to an Assyrian king but under the mighty hand of God, and earnestly beseeches the prophet to pray for him and his country. It would seem as if the work of Isaiah had been very largely successful in the city, and that the terrible punishment already suffered had made the people more willing to listen to a man whose words had been so signally fulfilled. Amid this new panic, Isaiah remains calm and confident, a figure of supreme heroism, whose faith, in its unextinguishable flame, was now to be crowned with a splendid triumph. Assyria had done enough. It was no longer to be allowed to bring suffering on Hezekiah. God was now going to fulfil His good word, and defend the city of David, and gratify His faithful servant's desire. So that when the king's messengers came to him in utter abjection, they must have been surprised at the glad assurance which they are bidden carry back to their royal master. Assyria's proud king is to be filled with fear, and to fall by the sword in his own land. This was the final oracle concerning the crisis, and the prophet can now voice his feelings of gladness, when he describes Jerusalem as at last being able to mock and despise the impious foe. For the present a limit was being put to

Sennacherib's progress. His boasting had been too great. The God who had planned all the parts of his various campaigns, had decreed that he should return to his own land, now at length, not as a conqueror, but in panic. The list of Sennacherib's campaigns is not completely at our disposal, and naturally any campaign crowned with disaster would not be recorded in the Inscriptions. The prophet most surely comforts his royal master. How it came about we do not know; that so it did fall out, we do know. In some strange and mysterious manner not yet explained, the army of Sennacherib suffered in some terrible way. The rumour had reached him that Tirhâkah, the great Pharaoh, was on his way with a mighty army to oppose his advance, and seized by terror he fled homewards, his army in some way having been smitten by an "act of God." In a moment Jerusalem is set free, and becomes a peaceful habitation. Then, doubtless, Hezekiah would make arrangements for a great Passover as a feast of national thanksgiving, as we have it so glowingly described in the book of Chronicles. Then would Isaiah see many of his desired reforms accomplished, and had it not been for the days of reaction in the idolatrous reign of Manasseh, the more radical and complete reforms of Josiah might have been anticipated. Hezekiah did not live long after these great days of triumph, for after a reign of twenty-nine years he would die about 686 B.C. How long Isaiah, now himself an old man, survived him we cannot tell, but, as a marked man, he would not long be safe from a king, like Manasseh, who made Jerusalem "swim with the blood of the saints." Fain, however, are we to believe that the great prophet died in peace, and not by martyrdom.

Sennacherib also died a short time after, at the hand of

an assassin, said to be his own son, Sharezer. There is an uncertainty about the words Nisroch and Adrammelech, but probably they explain one another and refer to some prominent god, like Asshur or Merodach. The great conqueror's last days were not days of glory. How vain all his proud glorying now! Did he who had prematurely seized the throne by means of assassination, find the same retribution awaiting himself at the hands of his own son? Then "with what measure ye mete, shall it be measured unto you again."

CHAPTER IX.

A Series of Oracles concerning the Future of Egypt, Babylon and Edom.

A very large amount of importance had, as we have seen, been attached by an influential party in Jerusalem to an alliance with Egypt, and we now have a great oracle dealing with that country, so full of wonder and mystery in the world's history. Much of the marvel of Egypt has, however, been dissipated by means of modern research, and its history is now being deciphered from buried temple wall and long lost sarcophagus. Dynasty after dynasty with many and various capitals, as with diverse origins of a tribal kind, had risen and fallen. Thebes, Memphis, Tanis, Bubastis, Sais, had each had their own ruling and conquering sovereigns, who became Pharaohs, or supreme over the whole land. About the time that Isaiah was beginning his public ministry, Piankhi, the great Ethiopian, from his distant

capital at Napata, near the fourth cataract, had swooped down upon lower Egypt and captured Memphis. Shabako was the founder of the twenty-fifth or Nubian dynasty, which reached its highest point of renown in the reign of Tirhâkah, about 680 B.C. The sudden withdrawal of Sennacherib's armies from Pelusium, whether by plague or exhaustion in 690 or thereabouts, had given Tirhâkah a breathing time, during which he consolidated his power. Sennacherib's successor, Esar-haddon, however, was determined on the overthrow of Egypt, and in 670 captured Memphis, compelling Tirhâkah to flee. In 667 Asurbanipal completed his father's work by appointing Assyrian governors over twenty Egyptian provinces, while in 661 he sacked the great and sacred city of Thebes. During these years, verily, the heart of Egypt must often have melted within her, as the oracle now before us describes. But after these years of Assyrian rule there came once again to Egypt an opportunity for revival, and Psammetichus, with the help of Libyans and mercenaries, established himself at Sais, as first king of the twenty-sixth dynasty. This new Pharaoh had a long and an illustrious reign of fifty-one years (660-609 B.C.) during which the decline of Assyria was going on, and its fall foretold by Isaiah was coming rapidly nearer. The circumstance that Psammetichus chiefly relied on mercenary troops may have entitled him to be regarded as the fierce and cruel king here spoken of. There was no national unity; no help for her in the national gods; no wisdom in her counsellors. Egypt was soon to be at the mercy of another great wave of conquest from the north. The graphic way in which the perplexity and confusion of this great country is described, while no doubt in measure corresponding to what was to be found in Tirhâkah's time,

seems to point to a much later period. There was to be a great devastation, and this is set before us in a most striking way. The supreme source of the national greatness and wealth of Egypt was their magnificent river the Nile, which fertilised all the surrounding country. Now the decay of Egyptian prosperity, and the fading of all her glory, is brought before us here under the figure of the drying up of the waters of this river. This is a poetical way of singular power, which our prophet here makes use of, to show the ruin of the nation resulting from foolish and divided counsels. No more shall there be trade and commerce on the fertilising waters, or on the fruitful meadows! We know how the Persian conquerors, who had taken the place of Assyria and Babylon as the adversary of Jerusalem, swept down as a mighty tornado, and reduced Egypt in 581, while the campaign of Cambyses was accompanied by terrible cruelties. He was indeed a fierce lord and a cruel king, before whom the weakened country lay an easy prey (525). Then, as Ezekiel tells us, the yoke of Egypt was broken, and all the pride of her power ceased (Ezek. xxx. 18).

Now all that Isaiah had uttered in his earlier words concerning the folly of an alliance with Egypt was fulfilled even in minutest detail, and Egypt had nothing more to do as a world-power. Jehovah's purpose uttered by the prophet was so completely realised, that the matter is now put thus:—the very name of Judah, as associated with Jehovah, shall be a terror unto Egypt.

History is the field in which the sovereign purpose of God works itself out. Assyria had been the power dreaded when Isaiah began his work; later on it was to be Babylon, and so naturally the great prophecies against this later adversary lie side by side with those against Assyria, and

seem almost to spring forth from the same fountain. In the Divine economy, however, every age has its own work, and every generation its own divinely commissioned prophet. The lofty spirit and courageous attitude of Isaiah would be an example and inspiration to all successive prophets. His brave words against Assyria became the model of their words against Babylon.

When Isaiah died Assyria was still in the ascendancy, and in 689 Babylon was razed in many parts by Sennacherib. Again in 648 Babylon felt the vengeance of Assyria under Asur-banipal. But in 624 the Scythian wave of invasion was rising, and in less than twenty years Nineveh, the great capital of Sennacherib, was a conquered place (606 B.C.). A new power seizes upon Babylon, rebuilds its palaces, and makes it the seat of a mighty empire. Nabopolassar, at one time an Assyrian viceroy, becomes the founder of a new dynasty, availing himself of the difficulties of Nineveh (625-606 B.C.), and his successors continued in power till 539 B.C., when the conqueror Cyrus established the Persian power in the ancient city.

We have a most graphic oracle dealing with Babylon, under the description of the Desert of the Sea. This language points to the extensive region watered by the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, reaching down perhaps even to the Persian Gulf. The fortunes of Babylon were of immense moment even in the time of Isaiah, as from time to time Assyria's supremacy was challenged. This oracle has by many been referred to the overthrow of Babylon by either Sargon (709) or Sennacherib (689), for the fall of that city fills the breast of the prophet with great excitement, but his feelings are those of amazement, not of sympathy. The situation seems rather to demand that this

oracle refers to a time when Babylon is the conqueror and oppressor of Jerusalem, causing sighing and suffering among the captive people. The prophetic eye had this sad vision that these captives were enduring the afflictions of a terrible bondage, but under deep emotion he foretells the end of all this. Elam or Persia, and Media in union advance against the proud oppressor, and the watchman on the tower to his immense astonishment, but certainly to his intense relief, is able to declare the fall of this great power. It was as if some mighty whirlwind swept across the country, and destroyed the ancient landmarks. And so suddenly too, so little expected in the banqueting halls of Belshazzar! The arrangements for the feast had in a moment to be suspended in order that the supreme officers might take their posts for the defence of the city. It was too late. The cry is heard, Babylon is fallen! And this meant soon for Zion a glad deliverance. God's threshed out, trodden down and afflicted people now received good news indeed.

The next oracle deals also with this same glad hope, even complete emancipation. The prophet describes the gathering together of great hostile armies, in a time of serious tumult and confusion. The Scythians and Babylonians had cast down the pride of Nineveh, great forces were soon to bring down the glory of the Chaldees, even to the dust. It is a terrible day of judgment that Jehovah has now not only on Samaria, Damascus, Nineveh and Jerusalem, but also upon Babylon. How purely Isaianic is the conception of the whole situation! The conqueror whether Scythian, Babylonian, or Elamite is only a rod in the hand of Jehovah. It is because that hand is stretched forth that such national upheavals take place. When God arises the people are all as sheep without a shepherd.

How vivid is the description of the Median conqueror as already on the horizon, in their determined thirst for conquest, regardless of treasure, and pitiless of human life, eager only to capture and possess new territory! Theirs was territorial lust indeed! Deioces in 710 established himself as the founder of the Median power in Ecbatana, and his empire lasted till 559, when it was merged in the rising Persian power. Medes helped Cyrus, and Gobryas the Mede held high rank in his army, as perhaps his first governor in Babylon (539).

In these two oracles thus we see how the complete and absolute overthrow of Babylon passes clear and distinct before the vision of the prophet. What Isaiah knew would happen to Assyria, his successor knew, with equal conviction, would happen to Babylon. And the destruction was to be thorough, even as that of Sodom and Gomorrah. So it happened in the later days of Parthian invasion. This was an event that must happen; it was part of the counsel of Jehovah, the secret of His servants, the prophets.

The fall of the enemy would mean the deliverance of Jerusalem, and hence we have a prophetic oracle, in which this city becomes the home of a ransomed people, and the centre of religion for the known world. They can sing first of all a most striking song over the fall of their mighty foe, a fall so complete that the much disturbed earth is now described as at rest, and bursting forth into notes of glad singing. The trees rejoice, and the shades of Sheol are filled with wonder and amazement! For great had been the boast of Babylon! There was to be no limit to his progress! He was even to take his seat among the gods on their great Olympus, and become deified like the Roman emperors! So man proposes, but God disallows. Under

the figures of a dishonoured burial, the disgraceful overthrow of the impious boaster is described. Jehovah of Hosts is supreme, and crushes to the very dust every thing or person that stands in His way, or challenges His Divine sovereignty, be he Assyrian or Babylonian.

O! let us hear what Jehovah Sabaoth is ever saying!

In the powerful oracle against Edom we have the answer, which Isaiah in his words refused to give. Again we are in the midst of some terrible convulsion of the nations. Once more Jehovah is pouring out His wrath in destructive vengeance on some great enemy of Judah. Edom is now the people under the Divine ban set apart for judgment, and what an awful judgment it is! This nation had formerly been part of the dominions of David, and under the supremacy of Jerusalem in Uzziah's reign. But in the time of Ahaz they had joined the coalition of Syria and Samaria, revolting thus from Jerusalem. The feud between Edom and Judah was ancient and of long standing; it was the never-healed strife of two nations, represented by Esau and Jacob—a strife, however, that might have been healed long ago, for the way of healing is shown in Genesis xxxiii. 3. Edom thus typifies a great adversary of Jehovah, even as it was so itself. In ch. lxiii. of "Isaiah" we have a great vision of Jehovah's triumph over Edom, and His victorious march through Bozrah, its chief town. Nebuchadrezzar had been the instrument of a serious punishment of Edom, but at the head of these victorious troops, the prophetic eye sees God, identifying Himself with His people's cause. What had been thus done to Edom by Babylon was to be done, and that even more effectively later on, by the Arabians, who dispossessed the Edomites of their old

homes, and drove them westward into new territories. About the same time Moab was conquered, and again weeping and lamentation would spread in all its towns as picturesquely and with graphic detail described by Isaiah.

The lot and destiny of nations are both alike determined by the Divine line of justice. In this there is nothing capricious or arbitrary. The principle of a selfish, human power must perish in all its embodiments and representatives from before Jehovah, and only that kingdom can remain in which righteousness finds abiding embodiment. How many earthly kingdoms must pass away before the true, even the Divine kingdom, the kingdom of God, shall come!

CHAPTER X.

A Series of Bright Anticipations of the Messianic Time.

Like green and fertile oases in barren deserts, we continually meet in Isaiah prophecies of brighter and better days in the midst of passages full of doom and denunciation. They stand in close association with them, emphasising the great truth that judgment is always God's strange work, and whenever happening always designed for the higher good of all concerned, being meant to bring about in the goodness of God a true repentance, and a holy people. This was distinctly the teaching of Isaiah, and although we cannot now be sure as to when, or by whom, the prophetic oracles gathered together in this chapter were uttered, we

can surely see in them an amplification of genuine Isaianic ideas. Our prophet had, as we have seen, a great hope for an obedient house of David. After the catastrophe that befell the Ten Tribes, and put an end to all hope, such as Hosea so tenderly expressed for Ephraim, Judah became the holy seed, the remnant—perhaps at first as a whole, latterly certainly only in part, out of which was to issue forth in the latter, or coming day, a true and faithful people. When judgment had been accomplished, and true moral and spiritual conditions brought about, as it was devoutly to be hoped in Jerusalem, the Mountain of Jehovah would in some very certain and splendid manner become really the centre of a world-religion. The Messianic Hope implies these conditions, and in essence is concerned with them primarily, rather than with any place or royal family. These latter local and patriotic considerations are always secondary; to the prophet the spiritual is first and supreme. The aspiration of every man of God is after "a kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." But such aspiration is always of necessity expressed in conditions of place, of use, and wont; thereby it is limited and conditioned. The pure spiritual truth is set forth in terms of the near and present. It is associated, not in essence, but in form of expression, with common illustrations of country and national institution. Thus we have a Jewish nation, a House of David, a mountain and house of God in Jerusalem. The hope of a world-wide religion, with its own pure centre to which all nations are powerfully drawn, is of necessity localised, but the prophetic interest is not one of locality, it is one of religion. Pure worship with a righteous king, and an administration of such perfect justice that peace is complete—this is the

prophetic ideal. He is not concerned as to where it may come, he is concerned that it does come.

The beautiful hymn in which this great Hope is sung occurs not only here in Isaiah as a great text, but also in Micah, where it is more completely worked into the context. In both places, however, it stands alone as a splendid oracle. Many things had to happen before the spiritual exaltation of Mount Zion here spoken of could be even thought of. Assyria had to fall, but not only this great power with which Isaiah so earnestly dealt, Egypt also, and Babylon, nay much more, before the pure religion of Jehovah could be recognised and become attractive to all peoples. As in the very earliest preaching of Isaiah the exaltation of Jehovah alone is the supreme thought, so we have that as the kernel truth here. And perhaps this is the reason why the oracle stands in this place. The prophet longed and prayed for the distinct acknowledgment of Jehovah in some public and efficient manner, as the God of the whole earth, and of all nations, so that to Him all peoples might do real homage. Whatever hinders is human unwillingness to yield obedience to God, and hence the prophetic programme always points forward, being fuller than any historical realisation in any time or place can be ; with an unsatisfied yearning it waits for the perfect spiritual fulfilment. It is indeed a Divine, a truly inspired aspiration, longing for the moment, when not in some little way, or small measure, God shall be glorified, but in way and measure alike worthy of Himself.

And how far have nations yet to travel before spears shall be turned into pruning hooks, and swords into plowshares ! We still wait for obedience to such supreme teaching as is here enshrined in this grand old oracle. That city or capital, where this teaching shall be first put into practice,

and thence allowed to spread, shall indeed be the world centre here foretold. If a pious and patriotic Jew prayed that it might be Jerusalem, the pious and patriotic still may well pray that it might be their own capital. But far above all patriotism stands religion. This alone can determine the true world-centre; tradition, nationality, geography here avail nothing. The centre is a matter of faith, and not of blood. The exaltation of any land depends on the presence of vital, spiritual religion—on the exaltation of God. That is the divinely chosen world-centre, whence goeth forth the Teaching that is truest and highest.

How grand is the universality of the missionary hope implied in the delineation of the coming day. All nations are to worship with gladness in God's House. Even Assyria! Even Egypt! What mighty faith was that which opened the gates of the Temple to nations which had been Judah's worst and most bitter enemies! The Divine interest in every people is here taught in clearest manner. Perhaps the prophetic circle of Jerusalem saw in the gifts brought to Hezekiah from Babylon and Egypt, as in the sudden withdrawal of Assyria's forces, an instalment and forecast of the day of universal homage to Jehovah; but the words before us point forward to something more real and fundamental than anything as yet seen, and can only be realised when God's Kingdom ruleth over all. What is said about Egypt especially is significant; its meaning in detail cannot be made clear. Here is a remarkable triple alliance—Assyria (or Syria), Egypt and Israel! How strange that any unworthy particularism or national exclusiveness should, in the face of these magnificent words, have possessed the Jews, or still dominate many minds! The germ of a perfect missionary propaganda is here in the sweep of a grand

reconciliation, which rises above every national barrier, and forgets all futile, national animosities. The gains of all true commerce are to be holy unto God. And thus Tyre, which was overthrown because her commerce had been used for selfish ends, was to have a new and better life, as she dedicated all her wealth to ends of a high philanthropy. Commerce finds its highest reward only in this way. The prophetic Hope gathered not only around Jerusalem and the Temple, it also gathered particularly around the House of David. Not indeed because of any essential worthiness in that House, but because of its affording to the prophet the dynastic form, in which to express his anticipations for a true King. Israel's kings were all anointed ones, and thus suggest the idea of a Messiah, or one truly and perfectly anointed. By such kings Jehovah did His work; they were the shepherds of His people. By a perfect King, a true Messiah, a good Shepherd, His work will be completely and worthily done. Such a one in his ideal perfections is now described. Judah's hope was at its lowest; it was as it were a dry root in a dry ground. But the prophetic hope was burning bright, Jehovah could so send down His Spirit that all necessary qualifications would be found in the coming one. Isaiah had had at one time great expectations for Hezekiah, as had Jeremiah for Josiah, so prematurely cut off, so had later prophets and psalmists for their own good rulers. But earth's best approximations only deepened the yearning for the realisation of the true and perfect. The ideal ever forms itself in the real, and grows out of it. Now what can be finer than the description of a true king here given, divinely endued with all necessary virtues for a perfect rule? Just, pure, kind in himself, and securing by his government that there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy.

But every excellence in the king, and every happy result in the kingdom, is due alike to the fact that Jehovah is known and acknowledged as God. The supreme necessity for our race is that such a ruler should come, and it is the Christian belief that in Jesus of Nazareth a Messiah has come possessed of the highest excellences here described, and these in their supremest form. His value for us, however, is in this, and not in any descent from the House of David.

The prophet then goes on to speak of a reunited Israel. This reunion was a prophetic ideal. The schism of the Tribes was very soon condemned, and their reconciliation was made a goal of hope. But captivity and scattering must first come. Only when Jehovah shall the second time deliver His people from Babylon as He the first time had delivered them from Egypt, would they be truly reunited, and made a fit instrument for the Divine purpose. In this true restoration there is to be a moral and spiritual state on the earth, when the old things of sin and wrong are to pass away, as the new things of peace and righteousness come into being. Of this also had John in Patmos apocalyptic vision. And for this we pray, as we say, "Thy Kingdom come." For only then,

The war drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled;
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

There was a reunion and restoration of Israel when Cyrus opened the prison doors of Babylon. This so far as Israel was concerned, but inasmuch as the words contain the Divine truth of the reunion of all nations, and the restoration of the whole earth, they wait the time of restitution when there shall be "one shepherd, and one flock."

The deliverance from Egypt, in the great Exodus, had been Israel's glad beginning as a nation, and this fact had a continual influence on prophetic forecastings. For us the deliverance of God's people at any time from any outward bondage, is type and illustration of the perfect deliverance and the final advent. Nothing physical in river, mountain, or distance, nothing political in the power of mighty empires presented any difficulty to the prophet. With God all things are possible, and so they are to him that believeth.

The glad songs of triumph, that now follow, are sung as the prophet-writer places himself in the position of a delivered and restored people. With a rejoicing heart his and their confidence in Jehovah as their king and deliverer is expressed. It is now a time when the people are conscious of the Divine favour, and sing as they celebrate with gladness the Festivals of Zion. Jehovah, the Holy One, is great in the midst. There is a righteous kingdom and peace prevails. All ranks share in the true felicity, and every wrong thing has ceased. Government will then be a good thing indeed. But in the joy of the moment the former things of war and fear are called to remembrance—those days when the proud armies of Sennacherib and Nebuchadrezzar surrounded the city, imposing tribute and demolishing the towers. But when outside foes have ceased, the prophet is anxious that all spiritual wrongs within should also cease. The eyes of God, as a flame of fire, burn up all impiety and hypocrisy, all wrong doing and oppression. Jerusalem must be a holy place when Jehovah is throned there as King in glorious majesty, and His dominion shall stretch from the River to the ends of the earth. The guarantee for any

continuance is found in morality; only in the Divine all-sufficiency shall enduring resource and protection be found. Jehovah shall supply Jerusalem with bulwarks and defences far better than ever Nineveh, Tyre, or Thebes had. Right not might shall be supreme. The rewards which once only superior force claimed shall be for all, and sickness, so often resulting from cruel and selfish indulgence, shall be no more. A people, conscious of forgiveness, living in righteous conditions, in right relation to the eternal laws of God shall remove all that harms, and cause all centres of disease to cease. How full of brightest hope is all this vision of the world and its wonder yet to be! The earth, so often cursed by "man's inhumanity to man, which has made thousands mourn," is now seen to be putting on her wedding garments. The prophet pictures the scene that falls upon his view with rapt ecstasy. He sees the great procession of delivered ones coming home with songs and rejoicing. As they move along, all nature, even in its most waste and deserted places, is stirred as with a new life or sympathy with them. All nature rejoices in a redeemed humanity, and reaches its perfect state when man is at one with God. If nature, "red in tooth and claw," seems to shriek against the creed that "love is creation's final law," it is only because of human evil. Let that evil cease, and all will be well. If only a way of holiness could be established this danger would cease. The one way between all nations should be one of righteousness; along that way in the golden year all shall travel unharmed. This had been the dominant note in Isaiah's first vision of God, and it remained, not only to determine all his own prophetic words about the supremacy of the moral and the spiritual, but the whole

teaching of the prophets, who followed him in the true apostolic succession, that is not of office, but of spirit. They all sing with us,

Oh! hasten, Lord, that perfect day
When pain and death shall cease,
And Thy just rule shall fill the earth,
With health and light and peace.

When ever blue the sky shall gleam,
And ever green the sod,
And man's rude work no more deface
The Paradise of God.

CHAPTER XI.

A Great Prophecy dealing with the Divine Judgment of the World.

The prophecy found in chapters xxiv. to xxvii. of our prophet, and now before us in pp. 110-118 is one whole connected piece, which has its own distinctive unity, and cannot be separated or broken up. In these words we have a magnificent description of a complete Divine judgment, a great day of Jehovah such as the prophets frequently set before us in strong and striking terms. It is ever a day of wrath and a day of darkness, full of storm and tempest. Now in Isaiah's genuine prophecies, as we have seen, this day of judgment is directed against definitely named enemies of God's people, such as Syria or Assyria in the political sphere, or in the moral sphere against great sins of Samaria or Jerusalem clearly stated. But when

we come to this prophecy, it is worthy of notice that there is nothing of this distinct reference to any such power as Assyria, and we seem to be brought face to face with some world-wide convulsion, with some very general destruction of the enemies of Jehovah. No longer are either Assyria or Babylon mentioned, and it seems impossible to find any one historical situation for the sweeping imagery and dramatic representations of the prophetic speaker here. The editor of the prophecies of Isaiah gives us these words as the grand prophetic appendix to the various oracles on the nations, so that we have the ten more detailed and definite oracles followed now by this great generalisation of the day of judgment, in which all the principles therein particularly applied are seen in their universal sweep. Now the prophetic spirit is disentangling itself from all local and national forms, which had limited and particularised it; it is soaring above mere provincialisms, and expressing itself in the terms of a wider and freer spirit. Thus are we being brought nearer the atmosphere of the New Testament, and prepared for the time when Christ, the greatest of all the prophets, would appeal to man as man, in the terms of the free human spirit, when all shall be one in Him.

As we look at the words before us we see the wide and comprehensive glance of the prophet. The whole earth, and every class of its inhabitants is affected. There is nothing now about Jerusalem or its rulers in particular. What the prophet sees is the neglect of morality on every hand, with the consequent disruption of human society. All this must have been very real to him as matter of sad experience. There is no symbolism—nothing figurative here at all. No doubt there may be said to be some exaggeration, but it is that of one who feels keenly. And

all this wide-spread disaster has its roots in wrong doing. This is what our prophet teaches in harmony with the whole line of prophetic voices in every age and clime. But he has the apocalyptic vision of God's people with representatives in every land, and he hears songs in praise of Jehovah coming from the uttermost parts of the earth. Even so does the prophet Malachi speak of the name of Jehovah being great among the nations, and in every place incense and a pure offering being offered to that Name (i. 11). Thus God's people are not now limited to one land or people, but are found in many lands and peoples.

The style of the prophet here is his own, and different from that of Isaiah, as he works out most elaborately his picture of calamity, in a way that no English translation can fully set forth. "Tottering, totters the earth! Reeling, it reels!" After these days of terrible convulsions in the earth, phenomena illustrative of the moral and social convulsions among men, there shall come a signal manifestation of Jehovah among His people in Jerusalem. In this all nations are to share, as they enter into an unveiled communion with God, when sorrow and misery shall have passed away. It is this wretchedness among men that veils God from man; its cessation, by the removal of sin, will reveal to us a Gracious God tenderly wiping away the tears of sorrow. Did not the prophet proclaim his hope that in this life such a vision of God would come? Was it simply for the life after death that he spoke? Can we not find here a remarkable anticipation of that teaching, which said, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life?" For death in this place may mean all that separates man from God, though doubtless it has been interpreted often as referring to physical death. The prophet, however,

contemplated a mundane unveiling, in which God would be recognised, and His people's reproach thus removed. For that reproach was this, that God had not been recognised in any very clear or distinct way as being all they said He was. His power could only be acknowledged, and their testimony accepted, as the result of some great unveiling. Has this not been brought to us by the revelation of God as the Father in Jesus Christ, as God "was in Him, reconciling the world unto Himself?"

We have next an apocalyptic passage, in which the powers of evil in the world are represented as animals, serpents and sea monsters, in words which suggested the illustrations and comparisons found in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. These shall be effectually punished, and the whole land, as in the older descriptions of the promised land, given up to the restored people. The bounds set in Exodus xxiii. 31 were to be from the desert, *i.e.* practically the Wâdi-el-Arish or stream of Egypt to the river, *i.e.* the Euphrates. The separation of the wheat from the chaff suggests the separation of sheep and goats in the great judgment scene of St Matthew.

In the striking songs of triumph that follow, we find an expression of sublime faith and confidence in Jehovah as the great Deliverer. The proud cities of Nineveh and Thebes had been reduced to ruins. Over and over again had Babylon, the proud, been made to suffer as in token of her ultimate ruin. In all this Isaiah's great words spoken aforetime had been realised. Not in strong cities, but in Jehovah, in a sense of righteousness can man find a secure defence, and in Him and in this alone. We do not need to find any particular occasions earlier or later on which such songs were composed or sung; they arose

naturally from contemplation on what God had so often done. There is, however, one historical reference here, even to the overthrow of Moab. We have a passionate outburst against this people, who had so often fought against Jerusalem. The prophet Zephaniah and his contemporary, Jeremiah, had denounced judgment on Moab in strongest terms (ii. 8, xlviii. 15), and this hostile people were completely crushed by the forces of Babylon.

Israel had indeed passed through severe discipline, but in nowise had they suffered like the nations. As Jeremiah had foretold, a full end had not been made of them, but they had been corrected in just measure (xlvi. 28). There has been always a Divine moderation, in which severity has been tempered by grace. Yet how great are the desolations of Jerusalem still in the time of our prophet? Nehemiah even was pained by what he saw on his arrival in the city of his fathers. The explanation of the slowness in the return of prosperity was the national lack of understanding of the meaning of the Divine Purpose. For this reason the fulness of blessing could not come. So much of unbelief and faithlessness yet remained, that the hoped-for day was always being delayed. Hence the song the prophet sings could not yet be sung by the people; much had to be done in their inner heart before they could make this song all their own.

How calm and supreme is the prophetic trust! All that ever was suggested or implied in Isaiah's inaugural vision is now a fully realised experience. Jehovah is sovereign, and He has trodden down all that stood in His way. But what an amount of human indifference is there all around to the great lessons of providence. Only by severest judgments can these lessons be taught; only thus can wrong be exorcised. It is the clear duty of God's people to acknow-

ledge the Divine sovereignty and abandon all other. They, while alive, should praise God's name, for soon they shall be silent in the grave. This same thought was found in Hezekiah's psalm of praise on his recovery to health. As a nation Judah had largely failed in its great vocation; very little of spiritual good had been accomplished for men. There is a note of disappointment, common to all great minds here, as the work done is reviewed; but faith in God is always buoyant, as it says even of what seems impossible, "It shall be done." Thus the prophetic hope finds expression in words, which at first speak of a great national revival, as in Ezekiel's vision in the valley of dry bones, but which have in them "a promise and a potency" of far more. The fuller and later faith of resurrection, expressed in Daniel, has been found here, and to emphasise the supposed reference to a physical resurrection of individuals, the words, dead bodies, have been added as an explanation of "thy dead." This sublime hope of individual resurrection to a blessed immortality is only found later, only found in highest and fullest measure in the teaching of Jesus, Who made resurrection a cardinal doctrine of the Creed. The prophetic words here contemplate life on earth in revived and efficient earnestness by a people conscious of their high responsibility. But they are pregnant words, seeds and germs of greater things. For if the dead are never more to rise, how shall God's great work, so poorly done by any generation of the living, ever be fully or worthily accomplished? The Divine dew is a life-giving power, capable of revivifying not merely a dead nation, but dead individuals also.

The Divine interest in the nation of Jerusalem is beautifully set forth in the "Song of the Vineyard." This is an

Isaianic illustration, as we have seen already. Here the Divine tendance is most tenderly expressed as so constant, and so sufficient. The hostile combinations, described as briers and thorns, are all in vain, when Jehovah is the Keeper. Wise would all be to cease their puny rebellion, and be at peace with Him!

The closing words are full of promise for a renewed and revivified people—a people who had passed through the great spiritual experiences through which Isaiah himself passed at the beginning of his ministry. God's people, His own vineyard, the true remnant, thoroughly purged from all their iniquities, and made a light to the nation, a missionary witness among the peoples, would take root, blossom and cover the earth with fruit. A true patriot might well pray that all this might be done by his own countrymen, even as our prophet here declares; but whether by one nation or another, God's word abideth true that His obedient ones shall do His work on the earth, and by yielding much fruit prove that they are His disciples indeed. In such a glad harvest of "a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," Isaiah, the sower, and all his followers shall rejoice together with all those whose high privilege it will be to have so great a reward in the happy reaping time.

CHAPTER XII.

The Religious Conceptions of Isaiah.

All prophecy is the application of the great religious conceptions, held by a prophet, to the circumstances of the time in which he lived. These conceptions as to God and

man, life and history, are the principles which guide and determine all his words. They come to us only in their expression, that is in their actual application to outward and transient conditions. We have the local form, the living embodiment of these principles, but themselves never in any abstract or systematised form. The prophets were preachers, and not scientific theologians; their concern was with the application of great Divine principles to the throbbing life around them, in their own country and time. But these Divine principles endure and survive all the temporary or national forms in which they may at any moment have found expression. The possession and clear grasp of such principles was the prophetic enduement, while the power and capacity to give them a forcible application to their own times made them the voices of God in their own generation. Isaiah, as we have continually seen, played a very prominent and important part in Jerusalem. Now he was the man he was, just because of his clear apprehension and brave expression of great outstanding conceptions as to the character of God and Divine Providence. By having and knowing these, he was led forth into the arena of the public life of his country, and constrained to speak in God's great name to kings and peoples.

What were these conceptions? Can we discover just exactly what Isaiah himself taught? Certainly it is not easy to state his teaching in a form that shall be entirely his own, and not partly that of the prophetic circle in which he lived, or of his great successors. The writing of the prophetic word was always much later than its spoken utterance, while the way in which the prophecies were afterwards gathered together and classified, prevents us studying them in the form in which they were first delivered. While, of

course, it is always difficult for an interpreter living under the light of a fuller revelation not to see more in the prophecy than the prophet either himself understood or desired to express. And yet the attempt to gather together the leading religious conceptions of Isaiah must be made, if we would rightly know his place in the history of the development of truth.

The prophecies have always a special value and distinct significance in relation to a prophet's inner life and personal experience. Thus we must place ourselves in Jerusalem at the time Isaiah lived. He followed in the prophetic succession such men as Amos and Hosea, while he lived before Jeremiah. Amos had dwelt upon the righteousness of God, while Hosea had most tenderly taught the importance of a right understanding of the moral relations of God to His people. Not yet, however, had Jeremiah uttered his great teaching about the new covenant which was to be written on the heart. Consequently while doing justice to what Isaiah held in common with his predecessors, we must carefully distinguish what he himself would have to teach from what his successors taught, either in Jeremiah's time, or after the Restoration. Now we have to deal with the grand personality known as Isaiah of Jerusalem, and with the principles embodied in his utterances to Ahaz and Hezekiah especially. The originality and brilliancy of Isaiah are beyond all question. His services to his country were supreme, and the declaration of grand principles about the deliverance of a repentant people inspired the whole course of subsequent prophecy, giving rise to the whole cycle of Restoration prophecy, known as chapters xl. to lxvi. of Isaiah. Thus it is easy to see how the belief in the Isaianic authorship of these chapters grew up. They are so

thoroughly in harmony with what Isaiah taught, and they embody a complete fulfilment of his own programme. The prophet, who so clearly declared the deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria, could also surely declare her deliverance from Babylon or any other foe. It was deliverance that was Isaiah's concern. A promise of complete deliverance in a purged Jerusalem was a germinal idea with him. But it never was the method of God to place His servants in conditions as yet wholly unrealised, so that they might foretell a deliverance from a danger not yet near. Thus we must not read more into Isaiah's own teaching than what is actually there.

We have already pointed out the importance to Isaiah himself of the great inaugural vision of God which he had. His dominant religious conceptions were made definite in an actual experience through which he himself then passed. Henceforward he was to see in the history of his own people only a counterpart of this his own experience. Then there had been for him a distinct crisis, with all the consequences that a vision of God must ever have. He had come himself into personal relationship with Jehovah as a living God, by the way of revelation, repentance and acceptance. He had got beyond all merely local, national, and ceremonial rites into the fellowship of the Heavenlies. In that moment he saw clearly what he had to teach men about God, man and duty.

Thus, first of all, we have Isaiah's conception of God. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is recognised as a supreme King, with a universal sovereignty. In such a presence the prophet falls prostrate, with a deep sense of human unworthiness. Jehovah is the thrice holy, and by this is meant the supreme God; with Him there is no other to compare. All

that belongs to Godhead belongs to Jehovah. He is the one King, the Holy One of Israel. He alone is God in all the transcendent majesty and glorious exaltation of His being. He also is Jehovah Sabaoth, ruling over all beings of every kind, in the heavens, and on the earth. His glory fills all things. Thus Jehovah is no tribal deity, belonging in some sense of national appropriation to one people, as Chemosh to Moab, or Ashur to Nineveh. No, He is over all nations; to them He speaks, and in them all He is concerned. All nations must give Him the response of obedience, by conforming to the law of righteousness. God thus is always the Supreme Power, ever making for righteousness. He has a kingdom of righteousness; this kingdom alone remains, while in the manifestation of Jehovah's power all that is unrighteous, even though high and mighty on earth, must pass away for ever. The conditions of Divine favour being shown to any one people cannot then be conceived in any arbitrary or capricious manner. Jerusalem indeed was ever apt to conceive of herself as a people of God, having the Divine favour in some fixed way all her own, whatever might be the moral conditions of life or conduct. Not so taught Isaiah. Covenant, temple, sacrifices—these might all be valuable as means and outward guarantees of spiritual realities. Isaiah doubtless valued them, but he valued the spiritual realities very much more. The Divine choice of a people, or the bestowal of Divine favour is always to be associated with righteousness. Religion and morality are essentially bound up together. True goodness means the acknowledgment of God, and the response of an obedient heart.

Thus also the Divine sovereignty implies a Divine purpose, which is ever seeking accomplishment in Providence.

This purpose the zeal of Jehovah, all the essential energy of His being, must perform. Isaiah has a very vivid sense of this purpose, which he continually contrasts with all human purposes. Even Assyria with all its greatness was but a rod, a mere instrument in the hand of this Mighty one. This purpose makes for righteousness, and can only find its goal in a righteous people. The manifestation of this purpose makes any epoch a day—the day of Jehovah, when He, and He alone is gloriously exalted.

To bring about this end, judgment in its most varied and severest forms must come. There must be a great purgation before God can be gracious to men or nations. This had been Isaiah's own experience. Conscious of the disparity between himself and God, he had this deep conviction that God could, and did purge men. But he saw that the Divine forgiveness could only follow a genuine repentance. As in his own case, so must it be in that of any people, there must be a complete acknowledgment of sin, and an abandonment of every false trust, before the Divine forgiveness could come into the happy experience of any. This the seeing and understanding of God in His true character would bring about. God waits to be gracious. If only man is obedient to God, then every blessing becomes his; he will eat the fruit of the land, and have peace and prosperity. Clearly God is a God of grace, ever willing to touch and purify the penitent soul. He would have all men reconciled to Himself, and His sufficiency is ever available to meet every human need, so that man may become holy. About the Divine forgiveness there can be no question, when true penitence is found. But unrepented evil cannot be passed over, for God is a consuming fire. The thrice Holy One so transcendent, far

off and exalted, may become very near in that grace which touches the penitent, and pronounces him forgiven.

The Divine relationship to man is set forth under very tender illustrations, so human and sympathetic, as had been done by Hosea. The claim of Jehovah on His people is that of Maker, Owner, Vine-dresser; the disobedience of man is coarse ingratitude, stupid forgetfulness, dull insensibility. God is a loving Person, and His service is obedience, rather than worship — a service that is characterised by well-doing, justice, kindness, charity. With those who thus walk uprightly God is. This is the glad doctrine of Immanuel, which Isaiah proclaimed. All who obeyed God could say, "God is with us." Thus a righteous life is inculcated, first of all, of course, for the nation, with which Isaiah deals. The presence and help of God with us make such a life possible and fully secure it; for such a holy alliance, as that of God and man, can truly overcome sin, and tread all temptation down. How near God was yet to come to our race the actual Incarnation alone could declare!

All this shows the worth of man, and how great his dignity is! Isaiah had for himself as an individual, directly and without any human intermediary, or ritual observance, seen and heard God. He had seen the heavenly vision, and heard the Divine voice. What one had done, others could also do. Thus to every individual the Divine voice might become a guide in all duty, as it ever saith, "This is the way, walk thou in it." Human responsibility and supreme duty may thus become grand convictions. Already spiritual and personal qualifications of character rather than outward and national privileges are being emphasised, and the doctrine of a true church or people of God was evolving

itself. Formerly, even in Isaiah's time largely, the State and the Church were regarded as one and the same, so that the political whole was confused with the Church existing in its midst. Now to our prophet the doctrine of the Church as a remnant is revealing itself. The State as a whole might crumble to pieces, but the pious kernel would survive. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were to realise this more keenly than Isaiah did, but our prophet points the way to a spiritual conception of the Church as a witnessing people. The doctrine of the Remnant, the purged few, leads the way. Faith and character, rather than birth and location—moral goodness, rather than profession, are being recognised as the conditions of citizen-membership in a true Jerusalem. How severe is the condemnation of our prophet on all formalism, and hypocrisy in connection with religion! He put no importance on the mere **opus operatum**, the service done; to him faith in God and obedience were essential. His denunciation of the great sins of his time was clear and distinct.

Even as he was called to service on being forgiven, so could Jerusalem become a faithful and righteous city, the centre of religion for the whole world. But God must be honoured, and His command supremely obeyed. Hence the work of history, and its grand issues, circle round the coming day of the Lord. All blessing to His people depends upon His coming in power as their deliverer, and in His raising up for them a true king, who might rule in His name, and in dependence upon Him alone. This true vindication of Jehovah implied a glorious Messianic future, when the no-gods of the nations should be destroyed, idolatry made a thing of the past, and the glory of Jehovah alone acknowledged. This hope of better things associated

itself primarily and of necessity with a revival of David's house. With genuine patriotism the prophet would pray that the Divine vindication might come speedily, and in Jerusalem, on Mount Zion; that it must and would come finally was his certain assurance. Every partial vindication of Jehovah as in the overthrow of Samaria, Syria, or Assyria for their rebellion against Him, was pledge and guarantee of a perfect vindication of righteousness. Every day of Jehovah against Assyria, Tyre, Egypt, or Babylon was prophetic forecasting of the final triumph over every enemy of truth and goodness—of that great consummation when all idols shall be destroyed, and God Himself be exalted alone, and "the kingdom be delivered to God the Father."

In the hands of Isaiah and his successors the great Messianic hope was being made more complete and distinct. Hope after hope had been disappointed, but Isaiah hoped on still. He began his ministry with the promise of the great day, and before he died he saw it exemplified in the case of Assyria. How Ahaz had failed him! How vexed often must he have been with Hezekiah! But for Jerusalem, and for David's royal house he still foretold a great future. The words, however, about the coming King, and the righteous kingdom, had more and more to be disentangled from such national or tribal forms. Neither Jerusalem nor David's house rose to their responsibilities, and both were carried into captivity. Later prophecy tells of a grand national restoration, like unto a mighty resurrection of the dead from their graves. What had not been accomplished by the living would yet be accomplished by their nation in its new life. Thus was being taught the germ of a doctrine of true immortality in a resurrection life of glorious felicity. To share in the future

consummation, the true restoration of all things, those that are now dead must rise again, for how long must be the time before there shall come the righteous kingdom, that condition in which there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy! Only in eternity can there be the victory over every human limitation, over sin and death itself, in which alone the hopes and yearnings of Isaiah, as representative of the best of our race, can find their true realisation.

TABLE OF EXPLANATORY NOTES ON NAMES AND WORDS.

(*Printed in dark type in the text, and in the order they occur.*)

(Pp. 17, 18.)

Isaiah, probably born about 760, has his vision 740. Born and lived in Jerusalem, of noble parentage. His prophecies gather round three epochs: (1) Jotham's reign 740-735; (2) Ahaz 735-720; (3) Hezekiah 720-701. "Isaiah" means the salvation of Jehovah.

Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah confined his ministry to this kingdom, while Hosea laboured in Israel and Samaria, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. Micah carried on his work chiefly in the provinces of Judah.

Uzziah reigned from 810 to 740. His reign had been one of great military glory and prosperity till 758 when he was seized with leprosy. 758 + 52 = 810.

Jotham became regent in 758, succeeding his father in 740, and dying in 736.

Ahaz became king 736, and died 715. His full name was Jehoahaz, but the omission of the first part is significant. He formed an alliance with Assyria.

Hezekiah. Probably regent with his father 726-715. Reigned 715-686, twenty-nine years. The dates as to his age and that of Ahaz are difficult. He abandoned the alliance with Assyria, and favoured one with Egypt. His reception of embassy from Babylon grieved Isaiah and called forth the wrath of Sennacherib 701.

Eloth or Elath, an important sea-port on the Gulf of Akabah, whence ships traded with the Red Sea, and brought gold from the mines of Ophir. It belonged to Judah in Uzziah's time, but was lost in the reign of Ahaz.

The Philistines occupied at this time the coast and lowland of Canaan. They had several very powerful cities, which had formed a confederacy, such as Gaza, Ashdod, Ekron, Ashkelon, Gath. The great trade route from Syria to Egypt lay through their territory, and the road from Egypt by Pelusium was known as "The way of the Philistines." They had been hostile to Judah, but in Hezekiah's reign they joined in alliance with him and rebelled against Assyria.

(Pp. 18-26.)

Gur Baal and **Mehunim**, a town and tribe of the Arabians to the south of Judah. Mehunim is probably Maon.

Ammon, a powerful tribe to the east of the Jordan, adjoining Moab, and kindred to Israel.

The **lowland** or Shephelah, one of the geographical divisions of Judah. The southern portion is called the Negeb, while the third or central division is the Hill country.

Ophel on the S.E. side of Jerusalem, strongly fortified.

City of David or Mount Zion on which the royal palace was built. The Temple stood on Mount Moriah.

Jehovah, the sacred name for the God of Israel. The Jews in reading the Hebrew used the word Adhonai, which means Lord. This word often crept into the MS. as here. We use Jehovah always in this prophecy. Sabaoth is rendered Hosts, but as it is not known what "hosts" are meant, it is better to keep Jehovah Sabaoth as Isaiah's name for Jehovah, as supreme sovereign over all. Translated as the Lord of Hosts in our Bible—a favourite name among the prophets, also in certain psalms, as xlvi. etc. "It is a condensed creed."

Seraphim describe the angelic spirits who in burning light surround the Throne of Jehovah. The derivation of the name for these guardian spirits is not certain, but here the suggestion is that God dwells in a blaze of burning light. See Isa. xxxiii. 14, p. 107. Our prophet spiritualises the whole scene.

Jacob is here used for the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, while Israel denotes Judah. The distinction is helpful in the study of Scripture. After the overthrow of Samaria Israel was used for the whole people, when the great schism of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was healed.

Lebanon, the magnificent range of mountains to the north of Palestine, famous for its mighty cedar forests.

Bashan, to the east of the Jordan, with rich pasture lands and bounded by high ranges.

Merchant Ships or ships of Tarshish. The great vessels used in trade with Tarshish in Spain were well known, hence this term was used by Isaiah to describe all trading vessels. Even those trading in the Red Sea were so named.

Sodom is frequently referred to as representative of bold open outrage and rebellion against God. The destruction that befell this place is typical of one that is complete.

Bath, a Hebrew measure of quantity. Acres mean what a yoke of oxen can plough.

Sheol is the Underworld or dwelling of departed spirits, called the Shades. It has not the meaning now attached to Hell. Hades is its Greek equivalent. The grave may be a good rendering in some places.

(Pp. 28-34.)

The Holy One. This is a favourite title for God in Isaiah. It denotes divinity, not holiness in the more modern sense. He is the God of Israel.

Ephraim, as the leading Tribe among the Ten, is often used as in Hosea to denote the whole kingdom of Samaria.

The foe, and Syrian. The kingdom of Syria had its capital in the very ancient city of Damascus. Rezin now was the last king. Syria is Aram, hence Aramaic is the name of the language of Syria. Samaria, which became the name for the kingdom of the Ten Tribes was in alliance with Syria, and so exposed to the wrath of Assyria. Damascus fell in 732, and Samaria in 722. The Syro-Ephraimitish alliance was formed to punish Ahaz for not joining with them against Assyria 736-735.

Manasseh, brother of Ephraim, and one of the Ten Tribes who revolted from David's house. Internecine strife among the descendants of Jacob had been the bane of their history, and the source of much weakness.

Beltis and **Osiris** are Egyptian deities. The Hebrew words as translated in our Bible are difficult. This rendering is from an amended reading. We know that the last king of Samaria (Hoshea) brought on his own ruin by forming an alliance with So, king of Egypt.

The **Cloud** here may be used to refer to the Shekinah Cloud which symbolised Israel's guide in the wilderness, see Exodus xiii. 21.

Right and might, opposites so often, are here used to translate the striking paronomasia or play on sounds here. The emphatic teaching of the prophet is often thus brought out.

Pekah was the second last king of Samaria, who reigned over the Ten Tribes for about twenty years 747-728.

The fire. In the cruel rites attending the worship of Moloch, which desecrated the beautiful valley of Hinnom, children were placed on hot brazen arms, and then fell into a burning cauldron. Hinnom, in Hebrew, means groaning. Gehenna became the place for all sorts of refuse, and its fires the type for the severest form of judgment. Ahaz patronised the worship of Moloch, among other idolatries.

Edom or Idumæa, a kingdom S.E. of Judah across the Arabah. It belonged to the descendants of Esau and adjoins Moab on its south border. Bozrah is its capital town. When Isaiah was speaking about Moab, the fate of Edom was anxiously inquired about. Edom was Judah's great hereditary enemy, and a later prophecy (p. 97) as also Isa. lxiii. describes the final overthrow of this people.

Tiglath or Tiglath Pileser III. (Pul) was a great Assyrian king from 745 to 727, being the contemporary of Jotham and Ahaz. In his time Judah first tasted Assyrian invasion.

(Pp. 34-39.)

Kir, to which the captives of Syria were carried by Assyria, was a province of the Assyrian Empire. The reading here is not certain. Kir was the name of Georgia, in Armenia. From Kir being mentioned along with Elam in p. 62, it would appear as if it was a people in S.E. of Assyria, such as Koa on the Inscriptions, or Gutium. See Ezekiel xxiii. 23.

Shear Jashub means "The Remnant will return," Isa. x. 21 (p. 53). In consequence of his deep convictions of this truth, the prophet named perhaps his oldest son by this name. Another son also bore a name connected with a specific prophecy.

The Upper Pool, an important source of water supply for Jerusalem, near the main road leading to the Jaffa Gate on W. Hezekiah did much for the strengthening of the water-works there. Doubtless also Ahaz was examining the place when Isaiah met him.

Tabeel's son was the nominee of Samaria for the throne of Jerusalem in place of Ahaz, who had refused to join the alliance against Assyria. It is not certain who Tabeel was; perhaps Rezin's father, but it may be a term of contempt. This son of some unworthy one!

Immanuel means "with us is God." In full assurance of the Divine protection, those who believed in God, as did the prophet, could give this name to their next son. The sign here is the assurance now shown, it being so great that even a son yet to be born would be so named.

Fly and bee here used poetically to describe Egypt and Assyria. Flies abound in the east where insect life of all kinds is plentiful.

The River is the Euphrates, a prominent boundary in ancient times. Across this river Abram the Hebrew (the Crosser) had come.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz. This was the name given by Isaiah to probably his second son, to mark his great assurance that in a very short time both Damascus and Samaria would be overthrown. Shalal and Baz denote spoil or booty, while Maher and Hash are verbs denoting speedy removal.

Shiloah as a fountain S.E. of Jerusalem from which a supply of water came to the city in gentle, flowing measure, is used as a symbol for the source of Jerusalem's spiritual strength, in contrast to the rushing might of Assyria. The rock-hewn tunnel through which the water came, with its old inscription rudely carved by the workers, is one of the most interesting remains in Jerusalem. It was found in 1880.

Many, not all, here indicates the doctrine of the Remnant, dear to Isaiah.

Oracle is a striking word used by the prophet in several places, constantly used by Jeremiah.

Rephaim was a fruitful district to the south of Jerusalem, the word here used meaning an arable valley.

(Pp. 39-44.)

Hivite and **Amorite**, the peoples who were driven out of Canaan by the Children of Israel. The translation here is based on an amended reading.

Adonis, rendering of the word Naaman translated "pleasant" in A.V. It is a title of the god Tammuz, who offered such plants of a quick growing kind to Aphrodite. They also quickly faded; thus would Samaria pass away.

Asherim and **sun pillars**, idolatrous symbols associated with heathen worship.

Hoshea, the last king of the Ten Tribes 728-722. Pekah's alliance with Syria brought down the wrath of Assyria on Samaria. In 734 the northern part had been invaded, and the people of Naphtali and Zebulon carried into captivity. To this Isaiah refers (p. 42). Pekah then submitted, but Hoshea entered into alliance with Egypt, which brought about his ruin in 722.

Shalmaneser was Assyrian king from 727 to 722 contemporary with Hoshea. He began the siege of Samaria, but did not live to see its close.

So or Seve is either Shabak the Pharaoh, or one of his tributary princes. Shabak belonged to the twenty-fifth or great Nubian dynasty, descended from Piankhi at Gebel Baikal or Napata between Dongola and Berber. This Pharaoh was defeated by Sargon in 720 at Raphia. Shabataka succeeded Shabak, and was followed by Tirhâkah about 693. He had been viceroy in Thebes, and formed an alliance with Hezekiah. The defeat at Al-tâku in 701 greatly weakened Shabataka's power. Memphis was taken in 670, and Thebes the No of Nahum in 662. Under the twenty-sixth dynasty Egypt revived with Psammetichus as Pharaoh in Sais.

Naphtali. See above under Hoshea.

Galilee of the Gentiles, *i.e.* the ring or district of the nations, on the northern border of Israel at first, but soon extended to the Sea of Galilee. Known as "The Region."

Midian signally defeated by Gideon, and the day of victory was ever after remembered. See Judges vii. 22-25.

Tyre, a great stronghold, the metropolis of Phœnician trade, and centre of extensive maritime enterprise. Tyre had paid tribute to Shalmaneser. In 710 presents were sent to Sargon from Chittim, *i.e.* Cyprus. In 673 Tyre had a five years' siege. Captured by Nebuchadrezzar in 572, and finally overthrown by Alexander the Great in 332.

Chittim is Cyprus.

Zidon, companion city of Tyre in Phœnicia, some twenty miles N. The fall or weakening of Tyre would damage the commercial interests of all the dependent colonies.

(Pp. 45-52.)

Chaldeans: the use of this word here is strange. Babylon is not as yet so described. Hence it has been suggested that the text of the whole verse is corrupt. Some read Canaan, others Chittim. But the meaning of the gloss is not clear.

Moab lay due east from Judah, between Ammon and Edom. This people continually caused trouble both to Samaria and Judah, frequently being conquered, frequently rebelling. They were conquered by David and paid tribute. Mesha (850 B.C.), a powerful king of Moab whose boastful account of his doings we can read on the Moabite stone, refused to pay the annual tribute of lambs and rams (2 Kings iii. 4). Hence Judah, Samaria and Edom united to crush him. Bands of Moabites raided Judah afterwards (xiii. 20, xxiv. 2) even assisting Nebuchadrezzar in the destruction of Jerusalem. Moab's ultimate fall is clearly declared. The oracle before us is graphic, and full of paronomasia. Dimon for Dibon suggests the Hebrew for blood. Here Mesha's stone, *i.e.* the Moabite Stone, was found in 1868.

Wâdi-el-Ahsa, or brook of willows, in the south of Moab, across which fugitives fly from the northern foe. This is the S. boundary as **Arnon** is the N. See Amos vi. 14.

Lambs refer to the tribute Moab had failed to pay.

Sela, a stronghold of Edom, meaning cliff. Perhaps Petra, a town with same meaning.

Sibmah is in Ammon, which must have been under Moab. The lamentation passes up from the south at Dibon northward up to Heshbon and Elealeh and Beth Nimrah (Nimrim).

Mount Seir is the territory of Edom.

Dedan and **Tema** are Arabian tribes.

Kedar, Ishmael's second son, and ancestor of nomadic traders in the East. The exact location is not fixed. The forces of Asur-banipal defeated Nebaioth and Kedar.

Piece of brass. The brazen serpent used by Moses had become an object of idolatrous worship, hence Hezekiah reduced it to its proper place.

Calno or Calneh, not identified, but as mentioned here in connection with Carchemish, etc., probably a Syrian town. Amos vi. 2 seems to place it *en route* to Hamath. A town six miles from Arpad, perhaps.

Carchemish, a place of considerable importance on W. of Euphrates, an extensive town formerly, and capital of Hittites. Jerablus represents it now. Sargon captured it in 717.

Arpad, N.W. of Aleppo. Reduced by Tiglath Pileser. Now a ruin.

Hamath an important city once, on the Orontes, captured by Assyria

(Pp. 52-60.)

720. The pass of Hamath was the extreme N. boundary of Palestine. Jeroboam II. recovered it from Judah 810.

Changer of boundaries, a title assumed by the Assyrian kings who depopulated many countries, rearranging their bounds.

Oreb, a great rock at which a prince of Midian was slain in the great victory of Gideon. The conquest of Midian and the Exodus were two great days of deliverance.

Aiath, the point at which an Assyrian invader might first touch Judah *en route* from the N. to attack Jerusalem. Town after town is then named on the direct road, and a most graphic account is given of a possible invasion. Assyria never invaded from this direction, but rather from the S.W., having come down against the Philistine towns. There was every danger of an invasion by Sargon (710), for the Inscriptions tell us how Judah and other towns were at this time "speaking treason." Sennacherib it was who devastated the provinces, and shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem (701). The words rendered "The destroyer, etc.," are difficult in the Hebrew, and an emending of the text is necessary. The Isaianic habit of suiting actions to the names of towns is seen here as in the oracle on Moab. Another illustration of this is afforded by Micah (i. 10).

Nob as a place is uncertain. Perhaps it stands for the Hebrew word meaning a height (Gob or Gibeah) the Hebrew N and G being confused. Some well-known spot as that from which Christ beheld the city may be meant (Luke xix. 41).

Fifteen. Hezekiah is thus said to have lived fifteen years after his sickness, which took place in or about the fourteenth year of his reign. The days of the sickness are said to be "those days," but the narrative of the sickness is connected with the reception of the Babylonian Embassy, which was followed by the great invasion in 701. From 715 to 701 is fourteen years ; from 715 to 686 is twenty-nine years.

The Steps, staircase or dial of Ahaz, something which Ahaz had erected, and which was visible from the rooms of Hezekiah.

Merodach maintained a life-long struggle for his own independence in Babylon against Assyria. Sargon had been successful in 709 after a long struggle, but on that king's death in 705, Merodach had been able to recover his power returning to Babylon, 702. Hence his embassy shortly after to Hezekiah. He became king in 721, and died in 695 in Nagitu to which he had fled.

The crown of pride. Thus is Samaria described. Omri removed the capital from Tirzah to this more excellent situation. The glory of Samaria had soon passed away (890-722).

Line upon line, a representation of what the scorners said over their cups as they derided the prophet (p. 60).

(Pp. 61-80.)

Mount Perazim, N.E. of Adullam, where David defeated the Philistines (2 Sam. v. 20).

Gibeon, probably connected with the defeat just mentioned in its further progress, for David smote the enemy from Gibeon to Gezer, a mound that has recently been explored. Gibeon is on the road from Jerusalem to Jaffa. The reference may also be to the victory of Joshua over five kings (Josh. x. 10).

Valley of Vision, formerly identified with Jerusalem as home of vision or prophecy, but it may be wholly allegorical, as in Ezekiel xxxvii. 2, where an imaginary valley is thought of.

Elam, the highlands east of Babylon, with its two chief towns of Susa and Anzan. Cyrus sprang from the latter. In 721 an Elamite king assisted Merodach against Assyria. Sargon reduced Elam 710, but the kings of Elam frequently had to be held in check until it was desolated by Assur-banipal. The prophet in vision sees Elam and Kir with their mercenary legions arrayed against Jerusalem. Are there no others? Perhaps others are suggested in following words.

Forest, the great arsenal or armoury of Solomon, called so from the cedar columns (1 Kings vii. 2; x. 17).

Lower pool in connection with the higher pool outside the city. Several pools are mentioned as being in Jerusalem.

Shebna, an unprincipled politician, who served his own ends rather than those of the State. He was an out-and-out opponent of Isaiah. **Eliakim** sympathised in measure with the prophet, but in no lasting way.

Tartan, the Assyrian commander-in-chief, a title of office, and not the name of an individual.

Ethiopia or Cush is Higher or Southern Egypt whence came the great Nubian dynasty of Piankhi. Also called Meroœ.

Zoan and Hanes, two important cities in Lower Egypt. Zoan or Tanis was the seat of the Hyksos dynasties. Hanes is not certainly identified. It has been supposed to be Heracleopolis a capital of a large district (Nome xx.) eighty miles S. of Memphis, where a kingdom existed before Piankhi consolidated the government. Probably Hanes is Tahpanhes, a place on the frontier on the way to Tanis.

Wilderness of South through which the embassy passed on their way to Egypt.

Braggart or Rahab, a poetic name for Egypt. The prophet emphasises the powerlessness of this people to help.

The King, *i.e.* of Assyria. Such a funeral pyre or Tophet as is made for the victims of Moloch is being prepared for the king of Assyria.

Lachish or Tell-el-Hesy, a strong Philistine town, but having a history going back to Amorite times, as explorations show. Sixteen

(Pp. 80-88.)

miles E. from Gaza. Sennacherib encamped here on his way to invade Egypt, and thither Hezekiah sent his ambassador to arrange the terms of a treaty. The provinces had been plundered.

Rab-sâk was a prominent civil functionary in Assyria entrusted with diplomatic and confidential business on behalf of the king, or staff. Rab means Chief.

Sepharvaim or Sipar, of which there were two. One on each side of the Euphrates, sixteen miles S.E. of Bagdad. Conquered by Sargon. The conquest of Sipar by Cyrus later laid Babylon at his feet.

Libnah, ten miles from Lachish; between it and Makkedah.

Tirhâkah became Pharaoh in 693.

Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, etc., Arvah, are all towns or districts in Assyria, conquered at one time or another. From some of them people were brought to colonise Samaria (2 Kings xvii. 24; xviii. 34).

Cherubim here represented as supporters of the Divine throne. The meaning is not certain. In some sense they are representatives of creation, like the four living creatures in the Revelation of St John. Perhaps winged griffins. (See Ps. civ. 3, 4.)

Ring. Illustrations of people led captive with a ring in their nose are given on the ancient sculptures.

Angel. Here as always in the O.T. any great pestilence or disaster is attributed directly to God's doing. What this particular disaster was we do not know; manifestly in the eyes of the prophet it came from God. The date of it is not fixed. What we think is that it took place some years after the Treaty of 701, and in a later campaign against Egypt, not mentioned in Assyrian Inscriptions, because of its disastrous character.

Passover. Note the effort to make this celebration the joint action of both Judah and the Ten Tribes, so that the whole people might be represented.

Manasseh (686-642). In this reign there was a restoration of idolatry, and a complete reversal of Hezekiah's policy.

Nineveh was made the capital of Assyria by Sennacherib. From 880 to 704 Calah built by Shalmaneser I. (1300) was the capital (Gen. x. 11). South of Nineveh.

Nisroch is not the name of an Assyrian deity, and the text is uncertain. It may stand for Asshur, as we have Asarach in LXX. In the same way there is a difficulty about Adrammelech. This name is found along with Anammelech as a name of a deity (2 Kings xvii. 31) as Adar the king. An Assyrian inscription mentions one son as taking part in his father's murder, while the word for sons is not in the Hebrew text of 2 Kings xix. 37.

Esarhaddon succeeded to Assyrian throne. Reigned from 681 to

(Pp. 89-103.)

668 hence his son Asur-banipal completed the campaign against Egypt, and destroyed Thebes 667.

No-gods, the emptiness and unreality of idols thus set forth by Hebrew word.

Cruel lord and fierce king here may only refer to the fact of a tyrannical sovereign. We need not seek to identify him either as Psammetichus or Cambyses. The prophet describes a condition of coming oppression.

Noph or Minoph, *i.e.* Memphis. Hosea ix. 6 has Moph. This was a sacred Egyptian capital, its name being Ha(t)-ka-Ptah, the abode of god Ptah. The name Egypt has been thence derived, Ai-gu-ptos. Built by Menes 3000 B.C. The site of Memphis was important from a military point of view. Taken by Piankhi 750; suffered terribly at hands of Cambyses 525. Its stones were used to build old Cairo.

Chaldæa or Chaldæans, later name given to Babylonians in time of Nebuchadrezzar in O.T.

Media had an independent kingdom under Deioces 710 in Ecbatana. It lasted till 559, when it was absorbed in the new Elamite or Persian Empire under Cyrus, some of whose prominent generals were Medes. Thus Gobryas. The overthrow of Babylon by Elam and Media is here strikingly set forth.

Destroyer, supposed to be the meaning of Shaddai as a descriptive title of God.

Ophir, source of minerals. Its site not fixed as yet, probably in the region of the Persian Gulf.

Own land. The restoration of the people to their own land took place on the return from the Babylonian Captivity.

Mount of Gods. The Olympus of the Assyrians called Arâlû where in its high regions the gods dwell and reign. Referred to by Sargon in his annals.

Bozrah, chief town of Edom, see above, p. 207.

Ir-ha-heres, a difficult word. It is strange that only one name out of five is given. Is this meant to describe the character of each? The LXX. translate the city of righteousness, and in virtue of this interpretation Onias in 160 B.C. obtained permission to build a Jewish Temple in Egypt. The Hebrew text probably meant the City of the Sun, which might well be termed a city of destruction by a worshipper of Jehovah (Jer. xliii. 13). Heliopolis or On is not far from Tell-el-Yahuda, and north of Memphis.

Pillar and altar are accompaniments of worship.

Assyria here probably means, or includes Syria, as it was afterwards understood—all north of Judah.

Pathros is the Thebaid or Upper Egypt.

(Pp. 103.)

Shinar or Senaar, elsewhere called Babylon. It is probably Shuner or Sumer.

Lands of the sea, or coast-lands, *i.e.* lands washed by the sea. The various places of captivity are mentioned here.

Law and statute, the great moral law.

Sharon, an extensive plain from Joppa to Cæsarea.

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